

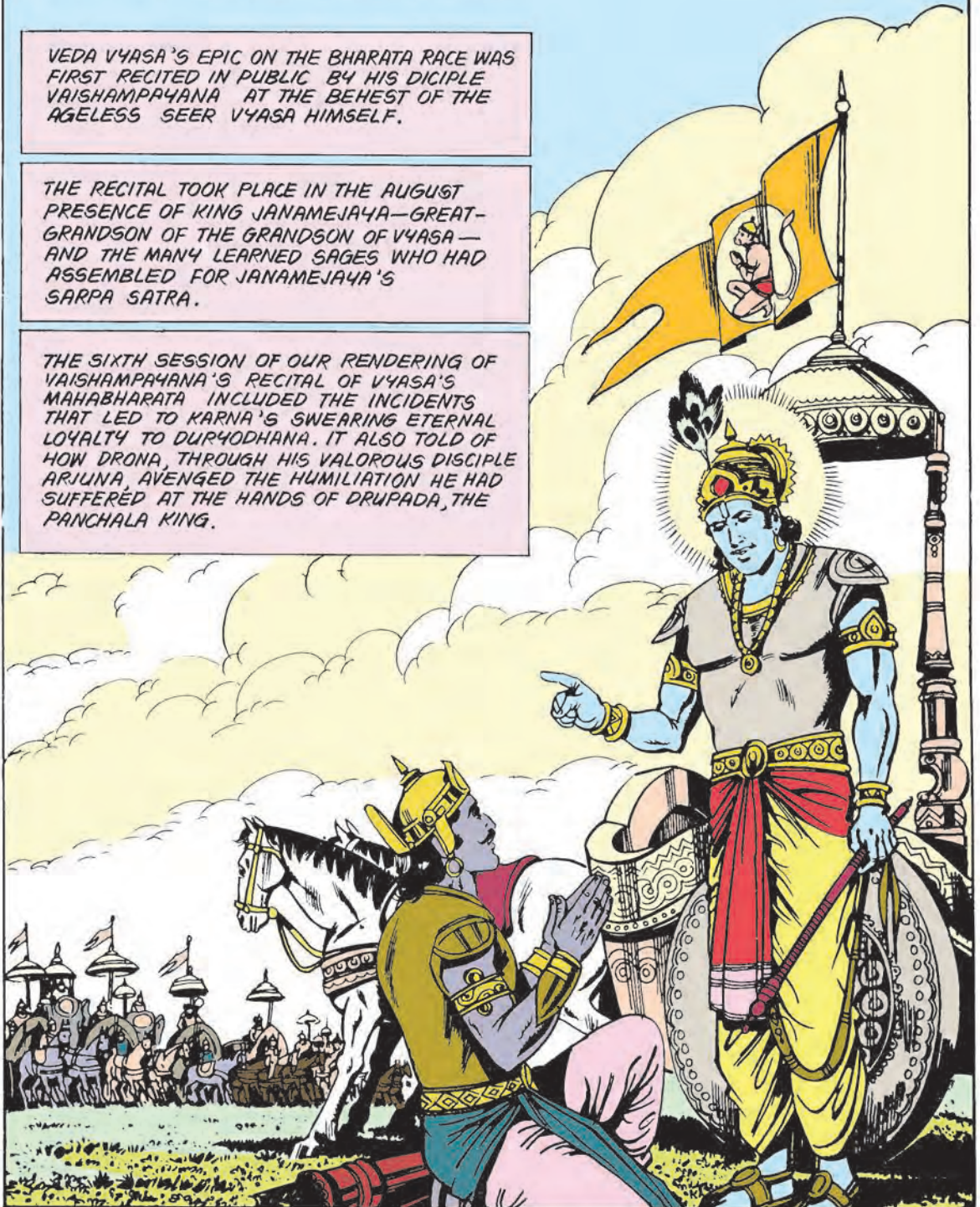
# Mahabharata-7

## THE CONSPIRACY

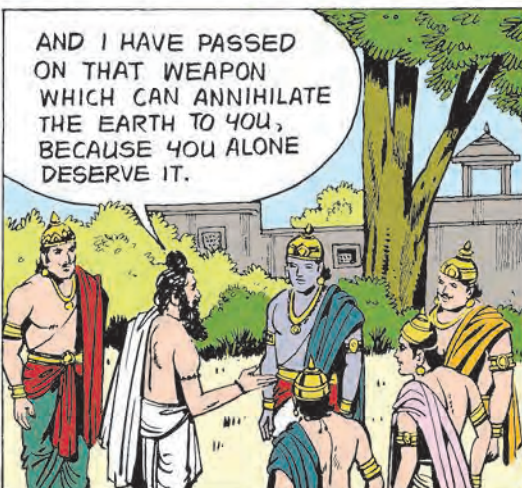
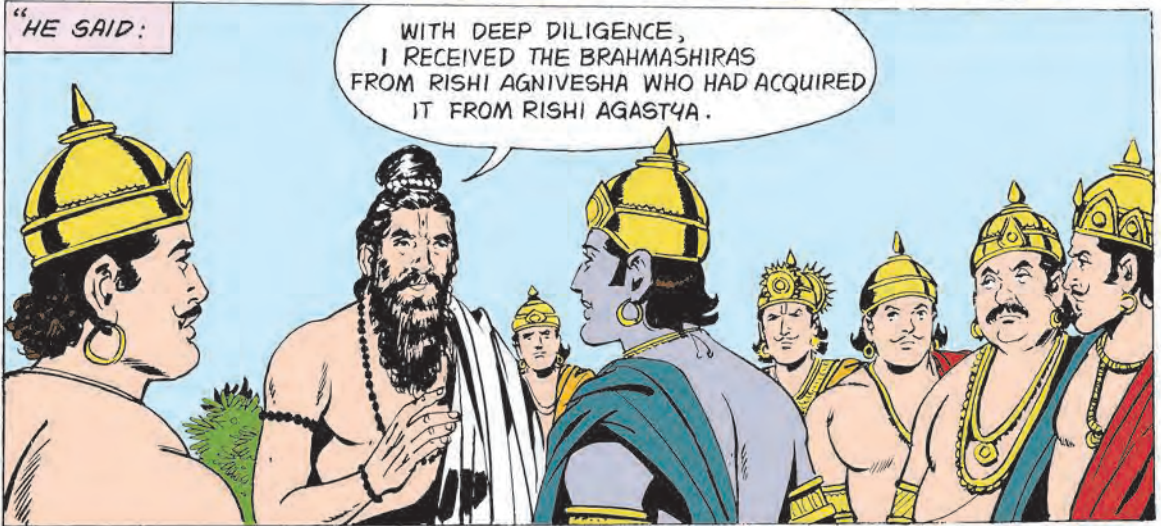
VEDA VYASA'S EPIC ON THE BHARATA RACE WAS FIRST RECITED IN PUBLIC BY HIS DISCIPLE VAISHAMPAYANA AT THE BEHEST OF THE AGELESS SEER VYASA HIMSELF.

THE RECITAL TOOK PLACE IN THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF KING JANAMEJAYA—GREAT-GRANDSON OF THE GRANDSON OF VYASA—AND THE MANY LEARNED SAGES WHO HAD ASSEMBLED FOR JANAMEJAYA'S SARPA SATRA.

THE SIXTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S MAHABHARATA INCLUDED THE INCIDENTS THAT LED TO KARNA'S SWEARING ETERNAL LOYALTY TO DURYODHANA. IT ALSO TOLD OF HOW DRONA, THROUGH HIS VALOROUS DISCIPLE ARIJUNA, AVENGED THE HUMILIATION HE HAD SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF DRUPADA, THE PANCHALA KING.







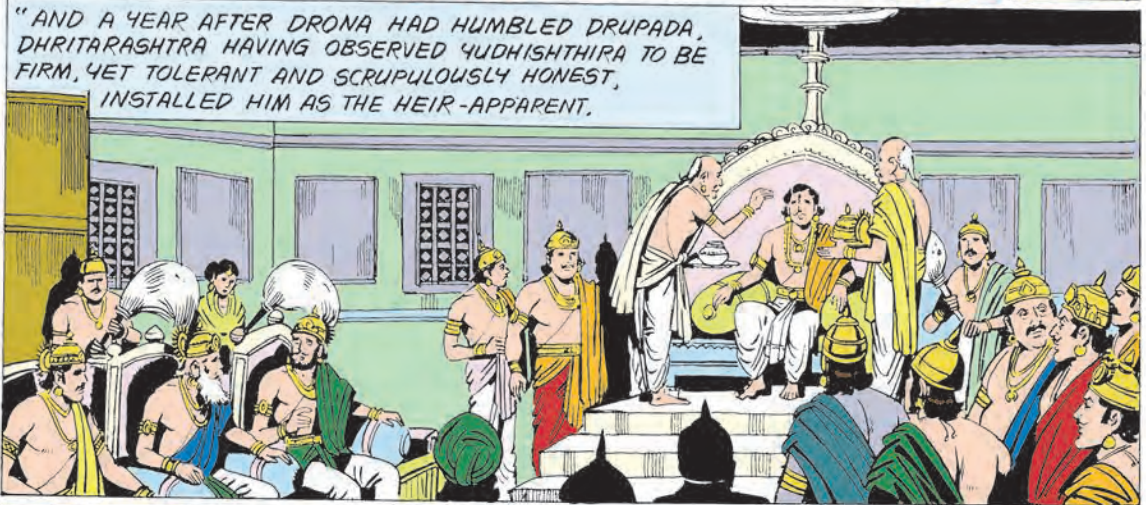


"WHEN ARJUNA GAVE HIS ASSENT THE GURU SAID:

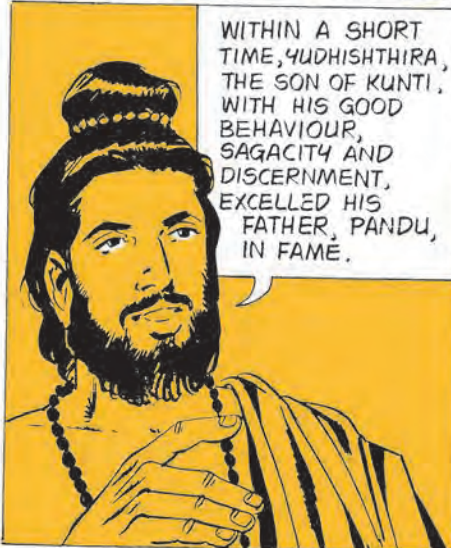
IF EVER I ENGAGE YOU IN COMBAT YOU MUST FIGHT WITH ME — WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION.



"AND A YEAR AFTER DRONA HAD HUMBLING DRUPADA, DHRTARASHTRA HAVING OBSERVED YUDHISHTHIRA TO BE FIRM, YET TOLERANT AND SCRUPULOUSLY HONEST, INSTALLED HIM AS THE HEIR-APPARENT.



WITHIN A SHORT TIME, YUDHISHTHIRA, THE SON OF KUNTI, WITH HIS GOOD BEHAVIOUR, SAGACITY AND DISCERNMENT, EXCELLED HIS FATHER, PANDU, IN FAME.

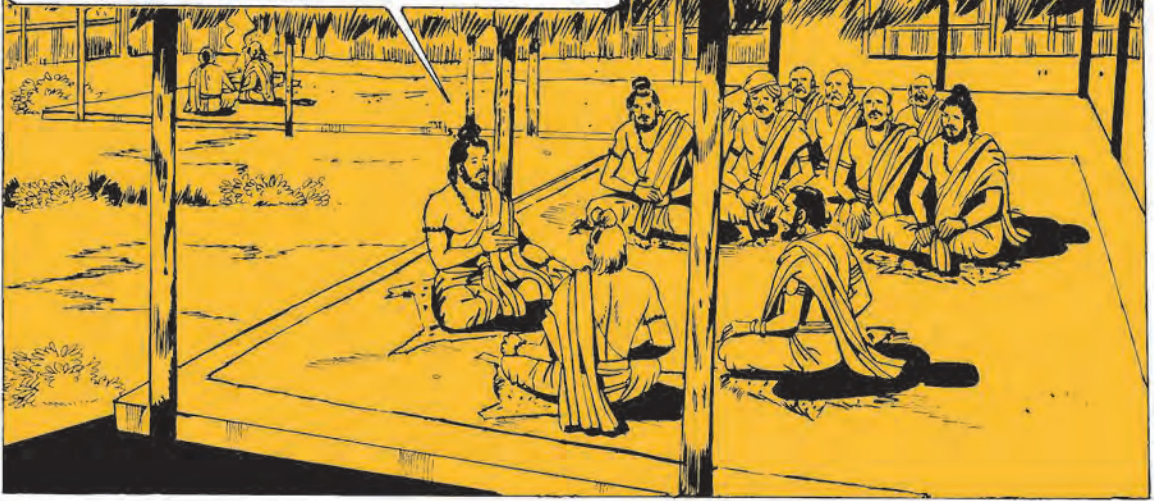


"BHEEMA, THE SECOND PANDAVA, TOOK INSTRUCTIONS FROM BALARAMA IN WIELDING THE SWORD AND THE MACE, AND IN STEERING THE CHARIOT IN THE BATTLEFIELD; AND YET LIVED IN PEACEFUL ACCORD WITH HIS BROTHERS.





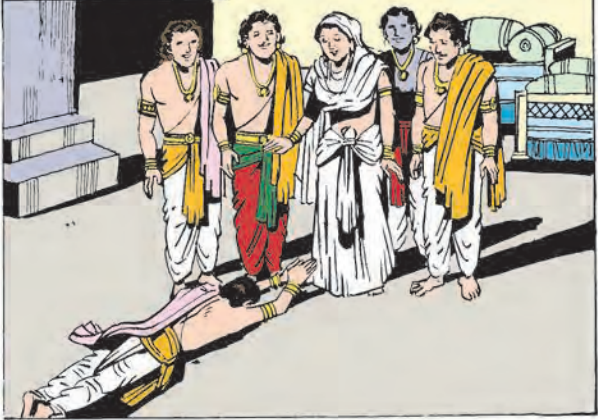
"ARJUNA WAS RENOWNED FOR HIS STRONG GRIP, AGILITY, MARKSMANSHIP AND PROFICIENCY WITH DIVERSE WEAPONS. HE WAS CONSIDERED UNRIVALLED BY DRONA.



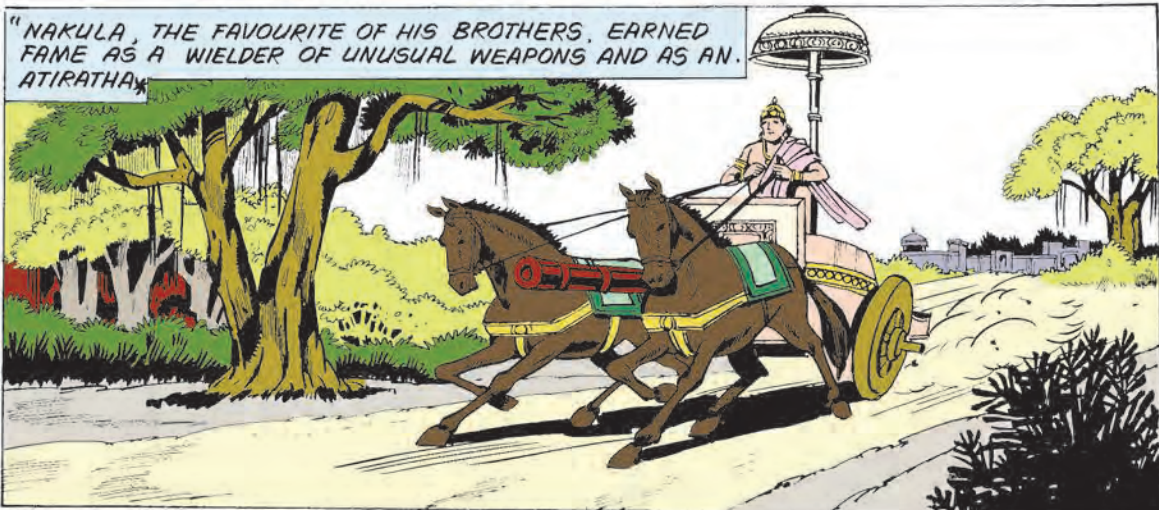
"SAHADEVA LEARNT ALL THE PRECEPTS OF MORALS AND MANNERS FROM DRONA WHO WAS IN SPIRITUAL LORE AKIN TO BRIHASPATI, THE GURU OF THE DEVAS...



"...AND LIVED IN PEACEFUL ACCORD WITH HIS BROTHERS.



"NAKULA, THE FAVOURITE OF HIS BROTHERS, EARNED FAME AS A WIELDER OF UNUSUAL WEAPONS AND AS AN ATIRATHA\*.





"INDEED, ARJUNA AND HIS BROTHERS BECAME MIGHTY ENOUGH TO SLAY SAUVIRA, WHO DURING HIS THREE-YEAR-LONG YAGNA HAD KEPT EVEN THE INVADING GANDHARVAS AT BAY.



"AND ARJUNA VANQUISHED THE YAVANA KING WHOM EVEN PANDU IN DAYS GONE BY, COULD NOT.



"THEN VIPULA, WHO HAD SHOWN SCANT RESPECT FOR THE KURUS, WAS ALSO SLAIN.



"AND AFTER SUMITRA, ALSO KNOWN AS DATTAMITRA AND RENOWNED FOR HIS POWER IN BATTLES, WAS SUBDUED ...





"...THE THIRD PANDAVA, IN HIS SINGLE CHARIOT AND WITH BHEEMA IN SUPPORT, PUT TO ROUT THE KINGS OF THE EAST AND THEIR TEN THOUSAND CHARIOTS. IN THE SAME WAY, HE CONQUERED THE SOUTH AND BROUGHT AMPLE BOOTY TO THE LAND OF THE KURUS.



THUS DID THE PANDAVAS, HAVING SUBJUGATED ALL OTHER TERRITORIES, EXTEND THEIR EMPIRE.



"BUT THE TIDINGS OF THE GAINFUL MIGHT OF THE PANDAVAS EMBITTERED DHRITARASHTRA.





"DEEPLY DISTRESSED HE SUMMONED KANIKA, THE COUNSELLOR WELL-VERSED IN THE SCIENCE OF POLITICS, AND SAID:

I ENVY THE PANDAVAS THEIR REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS. SHOULD I HAVE THEM AS ALLIES OR AS RIVALS? I SHALL ABIDE BY YOUR COUNSEL.



"THAT ELATED BRAHMANA REPLIED IN WORDS WHICH WERE SHARP WITH POLITICAL IMPORT:

LISTEN TO ME, O KING, AND DO NOT BE VEXED WITH WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.



THE MIGHT OF KINGS MUST BE MADE EXPLICIT WITH HANDS READY TO STRIKE.



SLAY YOUR FOE WITH GIFTS AND CAMARADERIE. KILL HIM WITH DISCORD OR WITH FORCE.





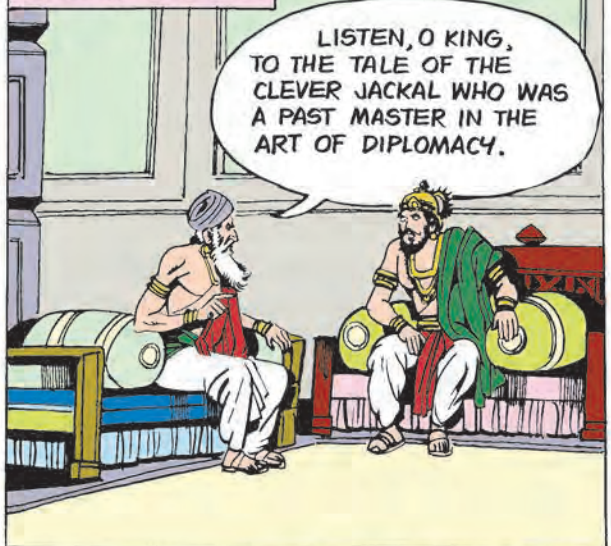
"AND DHRITARASHTRA ASKED:

HOW IS A  
FOE DEMOLISHED  
BEST? BY CONCORD,  
BY PROPITIATION, BY  
DISCORD OR BY  
AGGRESSION?



"KANIKA REPLIED:

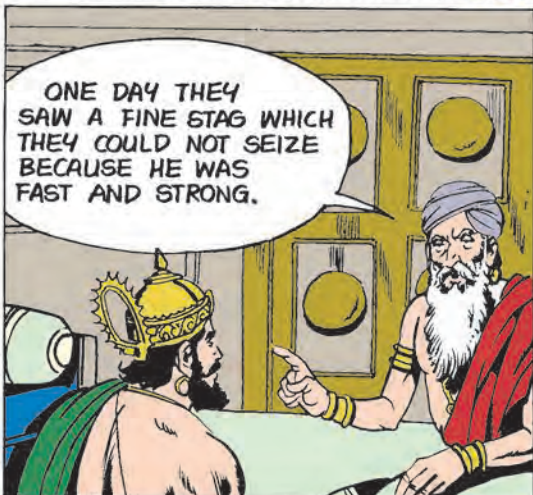
LISTEN, O KING,  
TO THE TALE OF THE  
CLEVER JACKAL WHO WAS  
A PAST MASTER IN THE  
ART OF DIPLOMACY.



"SUPREME IN SELF-INTEREST, HE LIVED IN A FOREST  
WITH HIS FOUR FRIENDS — A TIGER, A MOUSE, A WOLF AND A  
MONGOOSE.



ONE DAY THEY  
SAW A FINE STAG WHICH  
THEY COULD NOT SEIZE  
BECAUSE HE WAS  
FAST AND STRONG.

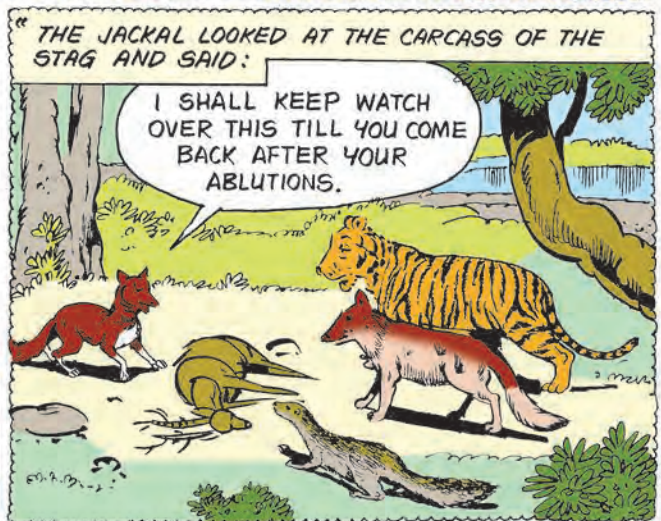


"AS THEY CONFERRED AMONG THEMSELVES  
THE JACKAL SAID:

O TIGER,  
YOU HAVE FAILED  
TO GET THE STAG BECAUSE  
HE IS YOUNG, SMART  
AND STRONG.



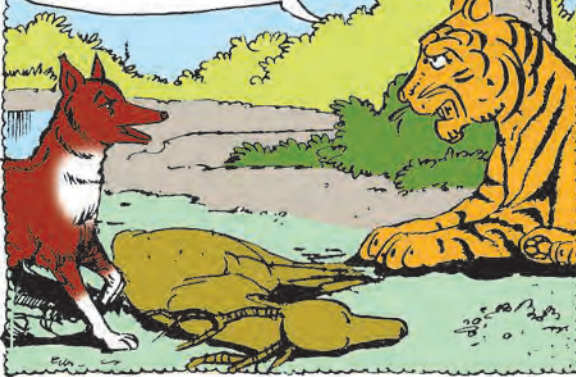






"HE SAW THE BROODING JACKAL AND SAID:

HOW IS IT THAT YOU WHO ARE SO CLEVER LOOK VEXED? LET US FEAST OURSELVES ON THIS FLESH.



"THE JACKAL REPLIED:

O FEROCIOUS ONE, THE MOUSE CLAIMS THAT HIS MIGHT FELLED THE STAG. AND IT IS HIS MIGHT THAT WILL FEED YOU, THE KING OF BEASTS.



HIS BOASTFUL WORDS HAVE MADE THIS MEAL DISTASTEFUL TO ME.



"THE TIGER REPLIED:

IF THOSE ARE HIS WORDS, I SHALL KILL MY PREY WITH MY OWN HANDS AND THEN EAT.

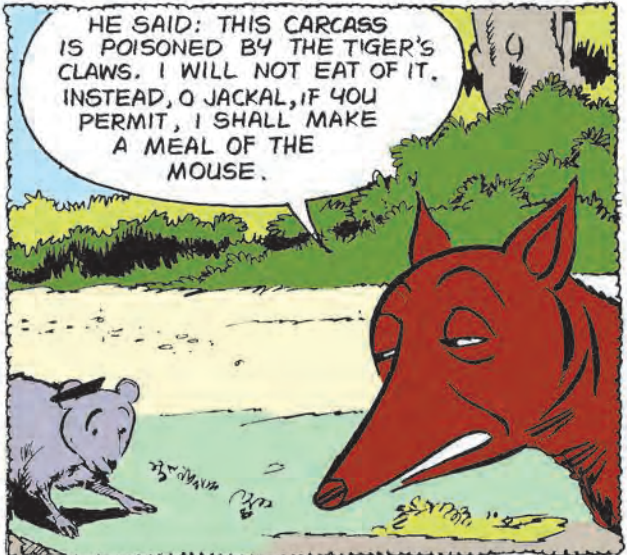


THE TIGER WENT A-STALKING AND THE MOUSE REACHED THE SPOT. THE JACKAL SAID TO HIM:

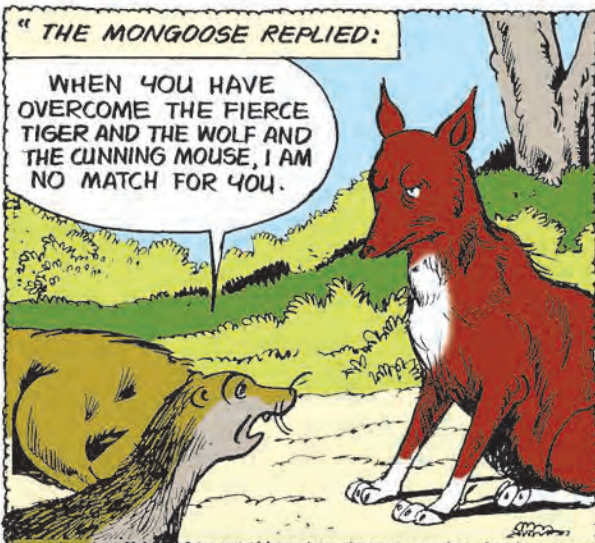
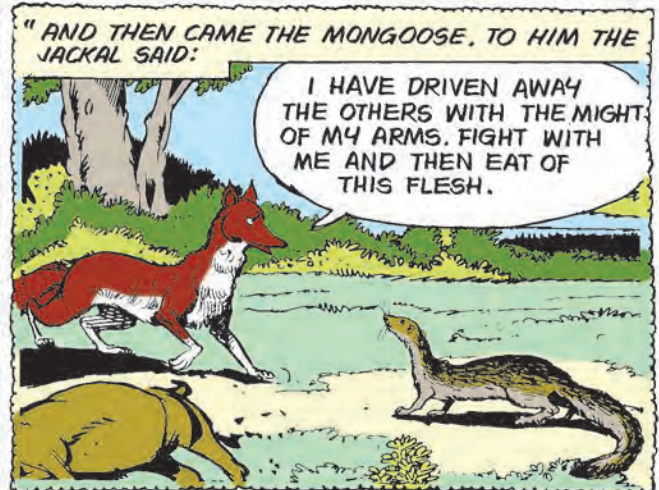
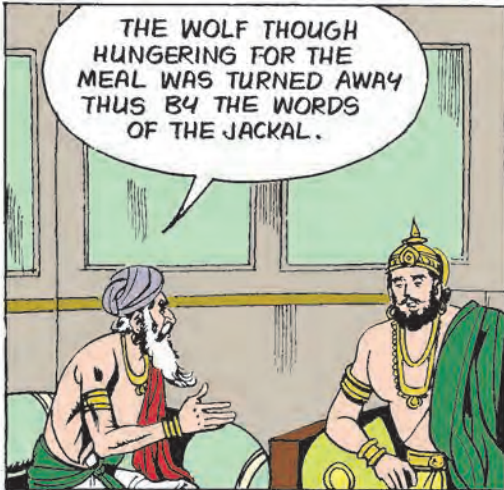
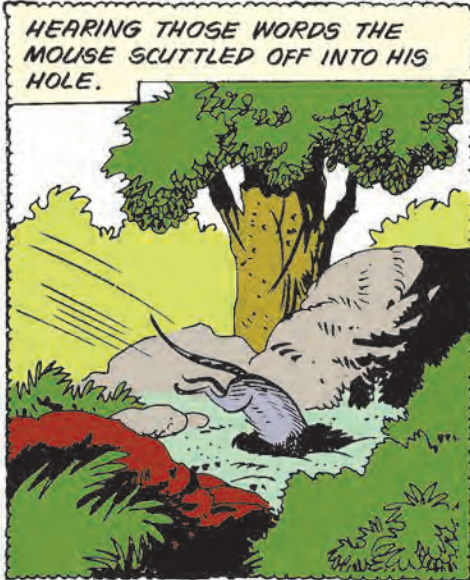
LISTEN TO WHAT THE MONGOOSE HAS SAID TO ME.



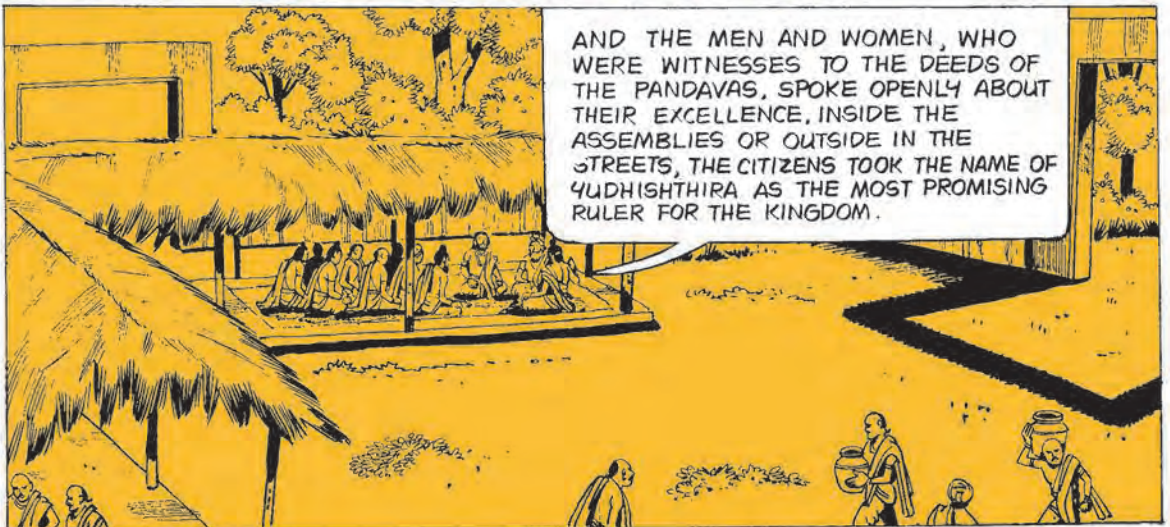
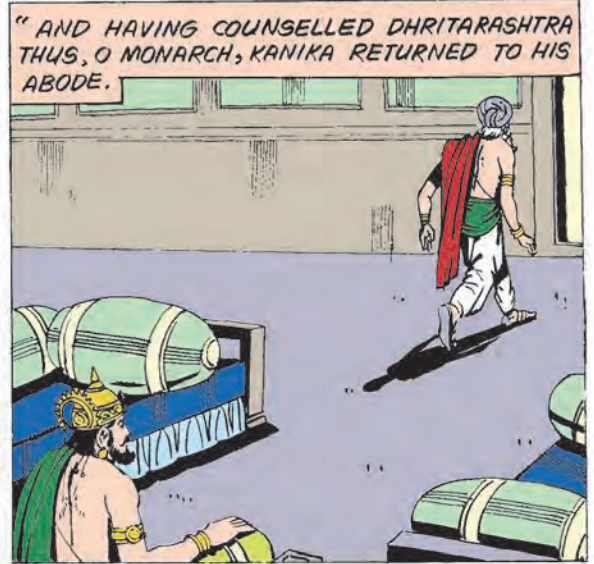
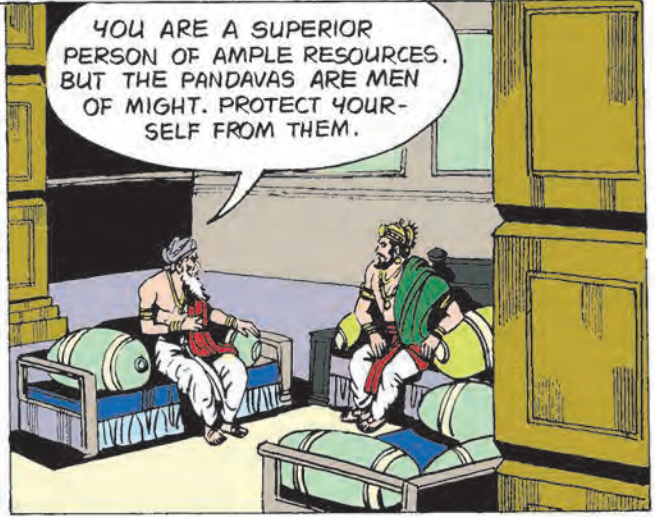
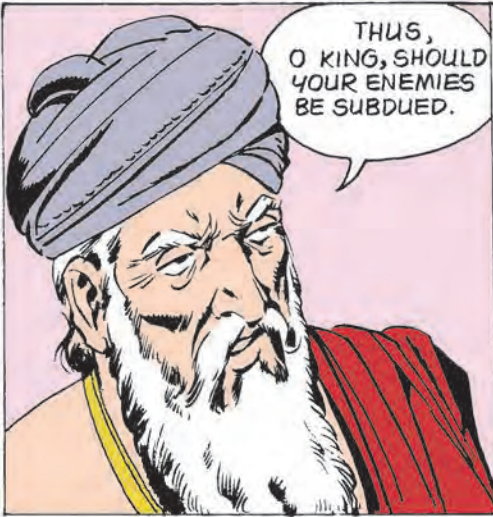
HE SAID: THIS CARCASS IS POISONED BY THE TIGER'S CLAWS. I WILL NOT EAT OF IT. INSTEAD, O JACKAL, IF YOU PERMIT, I SHALL MAKE A MEAL OF THE MOUSE.













"AND THEY SAID:

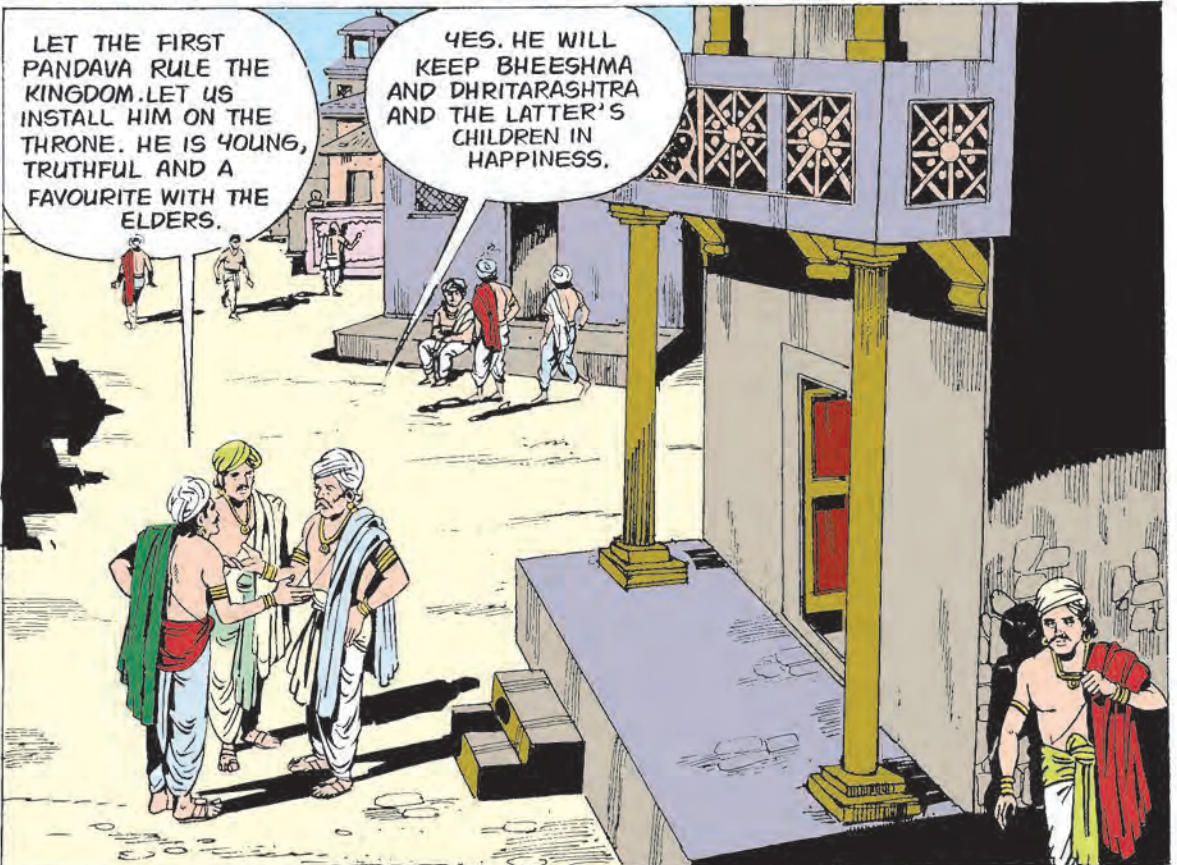
IF DHRITARASHTRA  
COULD NOT REIGN EARLIER  
BECAUSE OF HIS BLINDNESS,  
HOW CAN HE BE THE  
KING NOW?

BUT BHEESHMA,  
THE HONEST ONE, HAVING  
ALREADY GIVEN UP THE  
KINGDOM WILL REMAIN  
ADAMANT IN HIS VOW.



LET THE FIRST  
PANDAVA RULE THE  
KINGDOM. LET US  
INSTALL HIM ON THE  
THRONE. HE IS YOUNG,  
TRUTHFUL AND A  
FAVOURITE WITH THE  
ELDERS.

YES. HE WILL  
KEEP BHEESHMA  
AND DHRITARASHTRA  
AND THE LATTER'S  
CHILDREN IN  
HAPPINESS.





"DURYODHANA HEARD OF THESE REMARKS AND WAS SORELY VEXED BY THE PREFERENCE SHOWN FOR YUDHISHTHIRA. INTOLERANT AND JEALOUS HE WENT TO DHRITARASHTRA AND SAID:

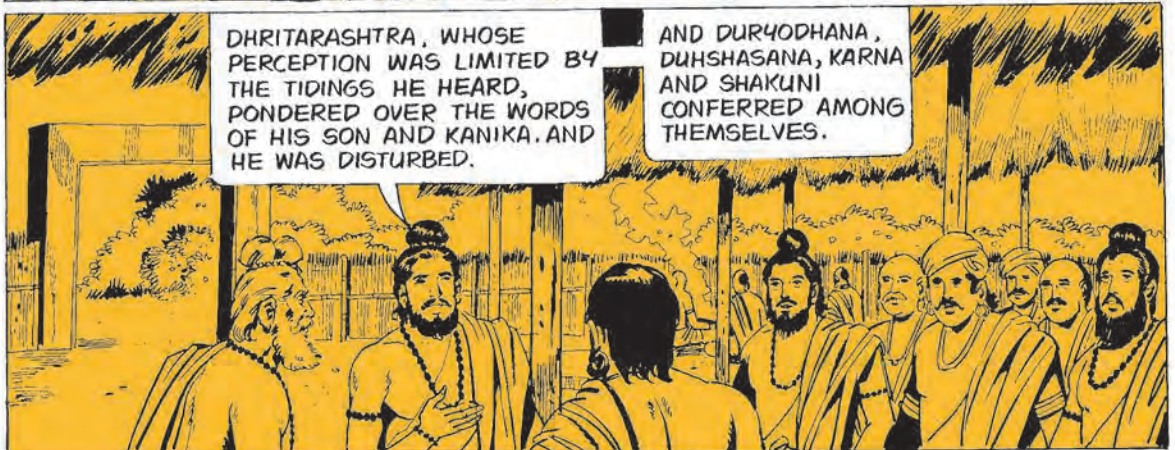
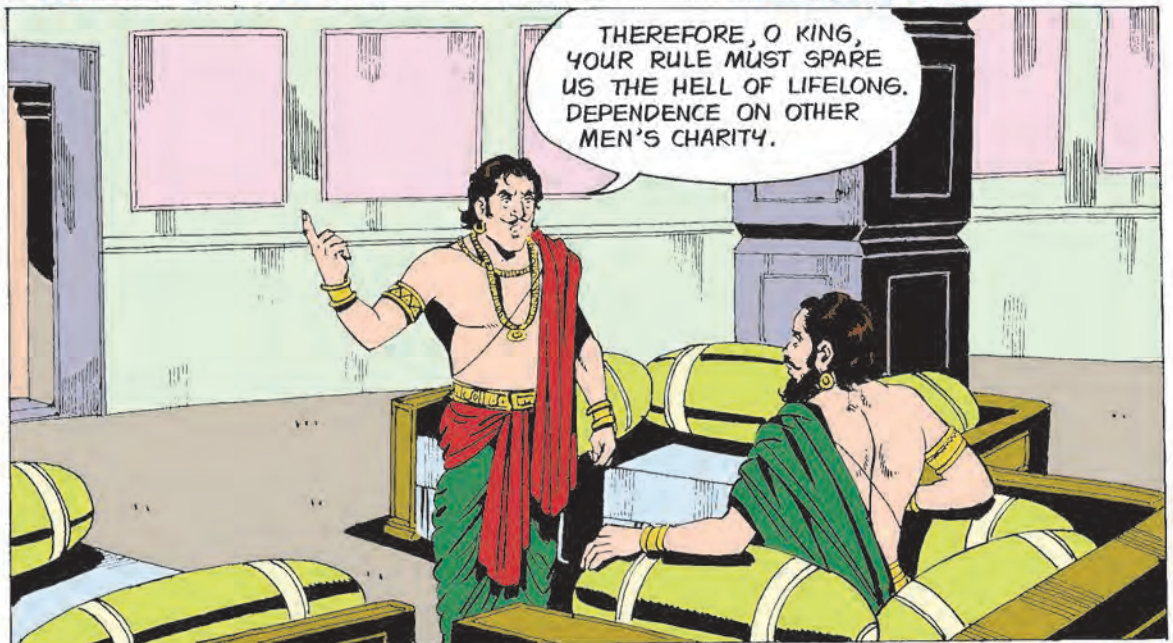
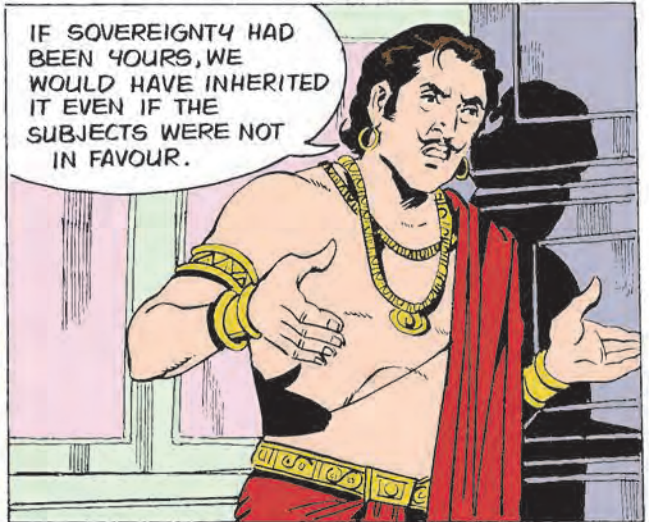
O FATHER,  
CASTING YOU AND BHEESHMA  
ASIDE, THE CITIZENS WOULD  
HAVE YUDHISHTHIRA FOR THEIR  
KING. BHEESHMA WILL APPROVE  
OF THIS BECAUSE HE HAS  
RENOUNCED THE THRONE.

IN DAYS GONE BY,  
PANDU ACQUIRED THE  
KINGDOM BY VIRTUE OF  
HIS EXCELLENCE, AND YOU  
DID NOT ON ACCOUNT OF  
YOUR BLINDNESS.

IF PANDU'S SON  
ACQUIRES THE KINGDOM  
AS AN INHERITANCE  
FROM PANDU, THEN THE  
SONS BORN IN HIS  
FAMILY WILL CLAIM THE  
THRONE IN THE LINEAL  
PATTERN.

AND WE  
ALONG WITH OUR  
CHILDREN, SHALL REMAIN  
THE LOWLY ONES IN THE  
ROYAL LINE. O KING, WE  
SHALL BE THE ONES  
SPURNED BY THE  
WORLD.







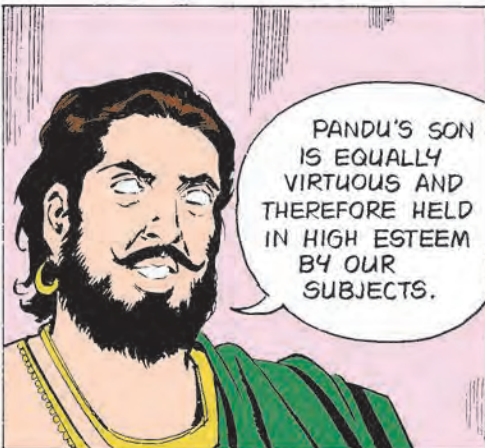
"THEN DURYODHANA CAME TO DHRITARASHTRA AND SAID:

IF YOU CAN SEND THE PANDAVAS TO THE CITY OF VARANAVATA UNDER SOME PRETEXT WE SHALL BE RID OF THE FEAR OF THEM.



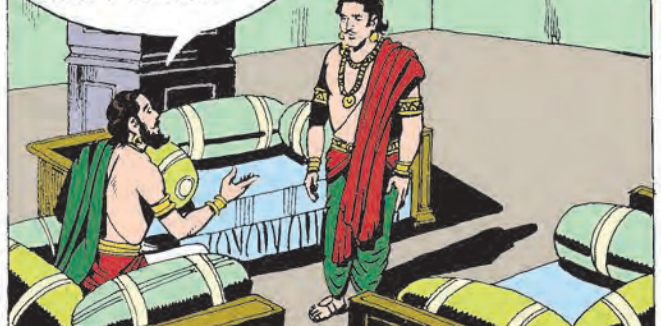
"DHRTARASHTRA THOUGHT OVER THE WORDS OF HIS SON AND SAID:

THE VIRTUOUS PANDU WAS EVER DUTIFUL TO HIS KINSMEN AND MORE SO TO ME. THERE WAS NO JOY THAT HE DID NOT SHARE WITH ME. HE GAVE ME HIS VERY EMPIRE.

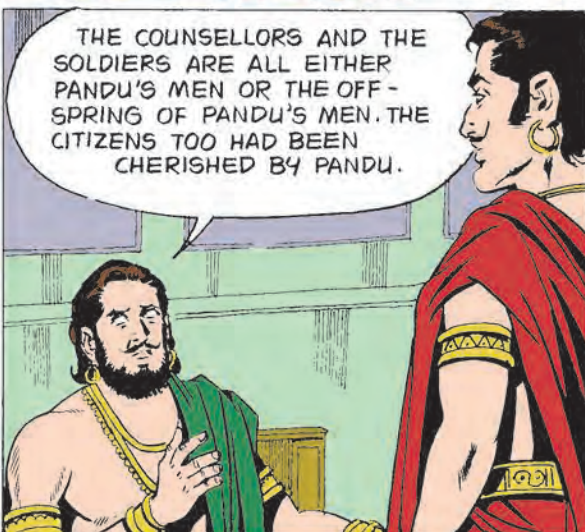


PANDU'S SON IS EQUALLY VIRTUOUS AND THEREFORE HELD IN HIGH ESTEEM BY OUR SUBJECTS.

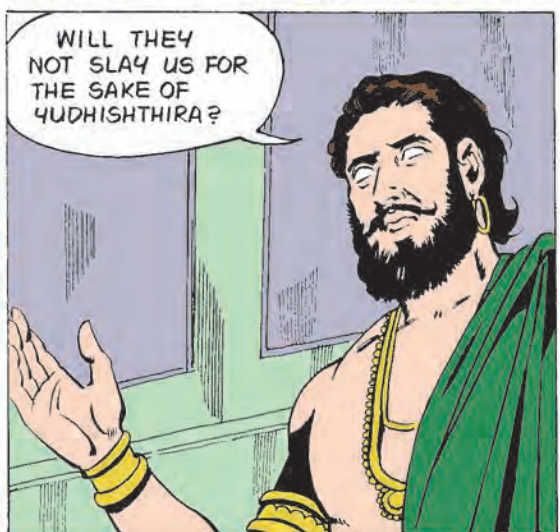
THE ACCUMULATED HERITAGE OF ROYAL POWER GIVES HIM MANY ALLIES.



THE COUNSELLORS AND THE SOLDIERS ARE ALL EITHER PANDU'S MEN OR THE OFF-SPRING OF PANDU'S MEN. THE CITIZENS TOO HAD BEEN CHERISHED BY PANDU.



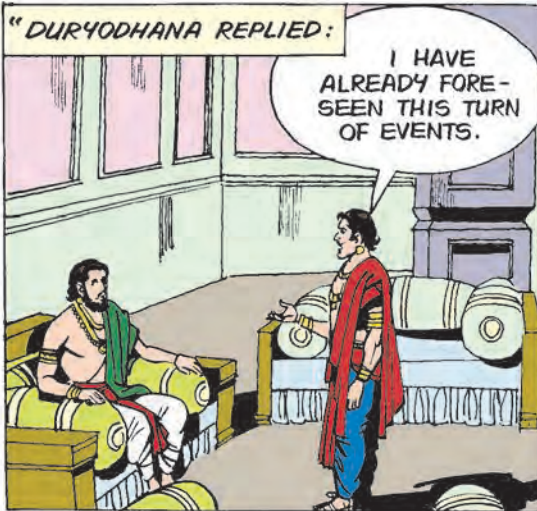
WILL THEY NOT SLAY US FOR THE SAKE OF YUDHISHTHIRA?



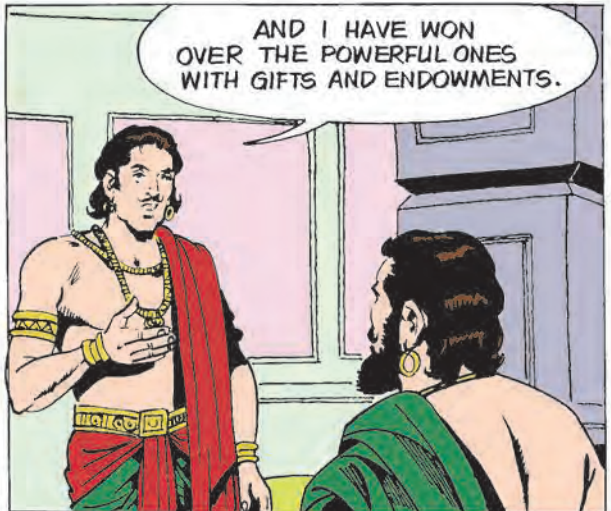


"DURYODHANA REPLIED:

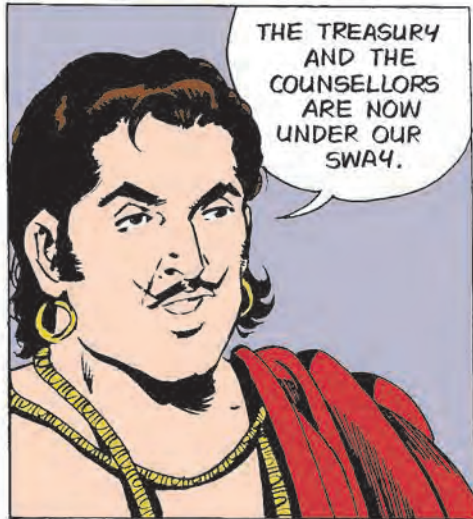
I HAVE  
ALREADY FORE-  
SEEN THIS TURN  
OF EVENTS.



AND I HAVE WON  
OVER THE POWERFUL ONES  
WITH GIFTS AND ENDOWMENTS.



THE TREASURY  
AND THE COUNSELLORS  
ARE NOW  
UNDER OUR  
SWAY.



THEREFORE, O KING,  
ENSURE THE REMOVAL OF  
THE PANDAVAS TO  
VARANAVATA BY SOME  
SUBTLE PLAN.

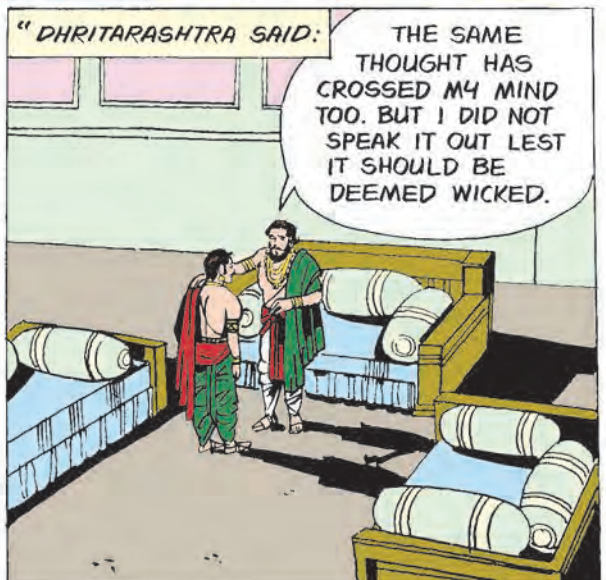


WHEN MY HOLD ON THE  
DOMINION IS MADE FIRM,  
KUNTI AND HER  
CHILDREN MAY BE  
BROUGHT BACK.

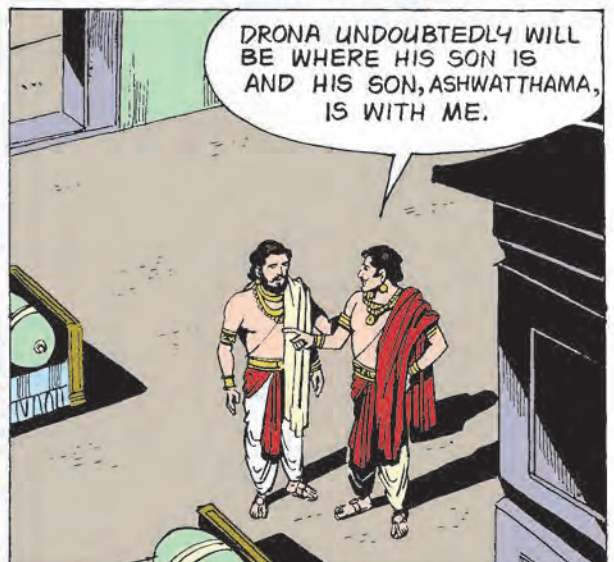
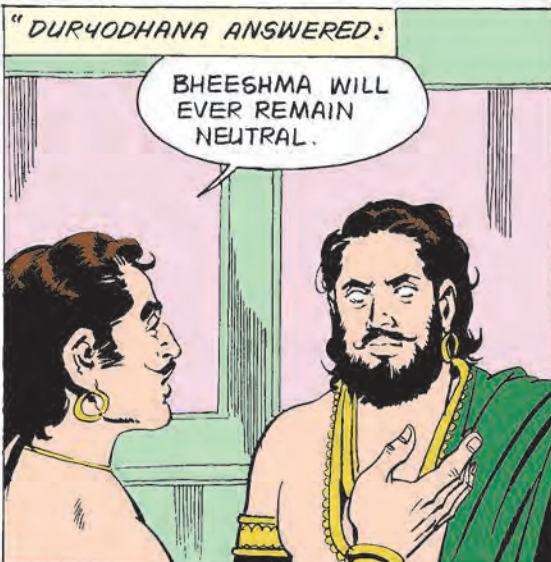
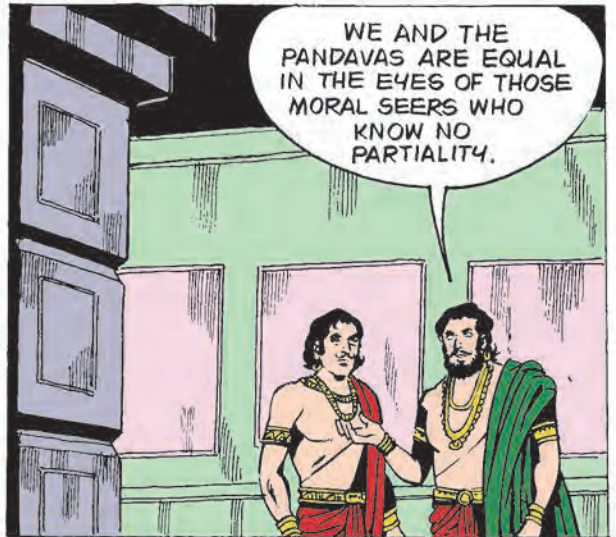
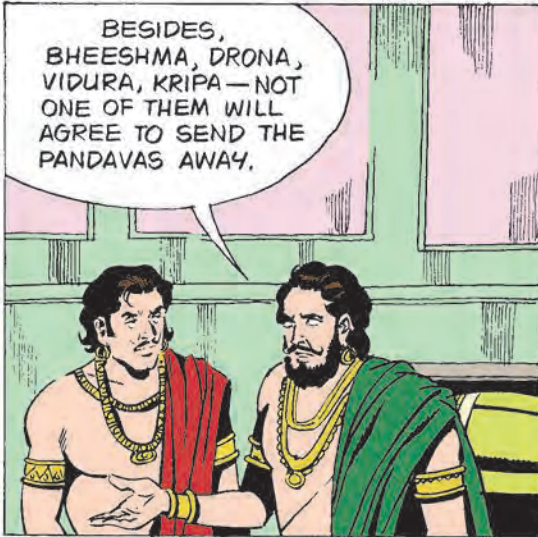


"DHRTARASHTRA SAID:

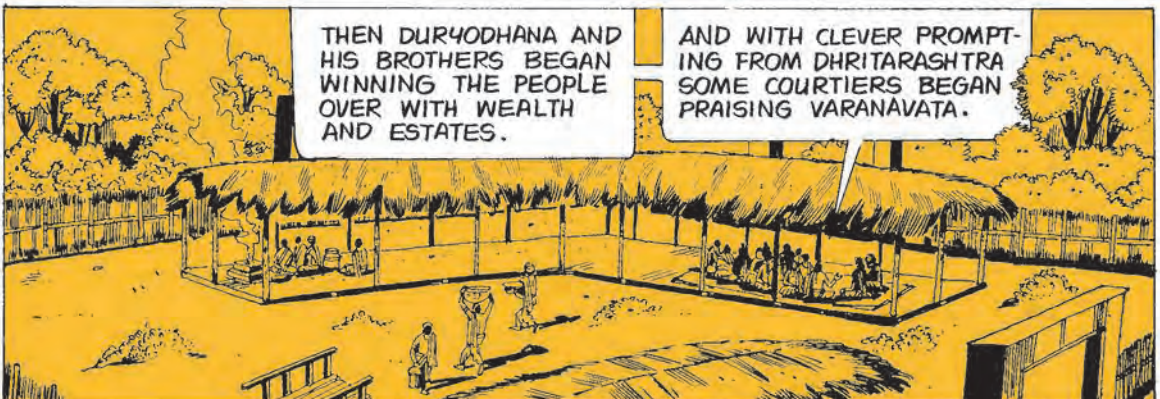
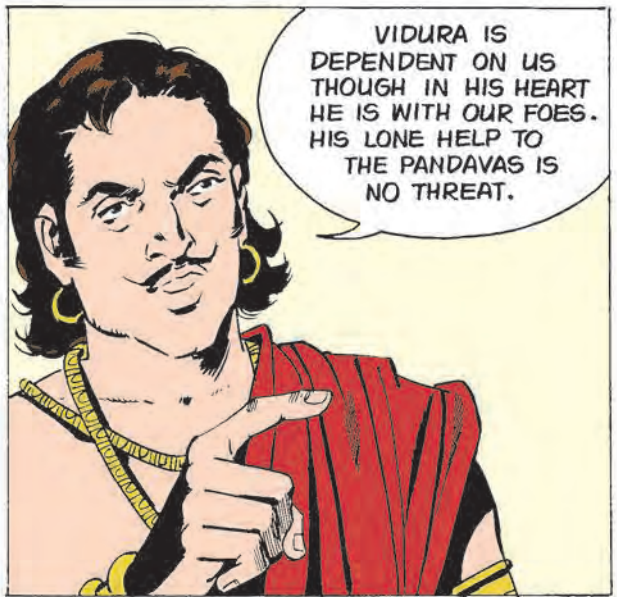
THE SAME  
THOUGHT HAS  
CROSSED MY MIND  
TOO. BUT I DID NOT  
SPEAK IT OUT LEST  
IT SHOULD BE  
DEEMED WICKED.



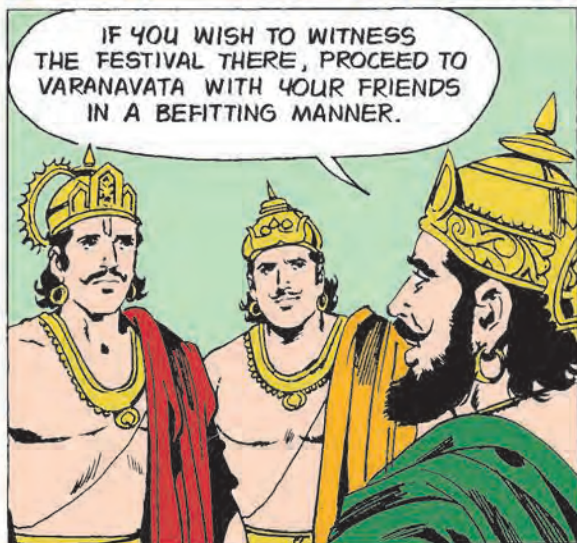
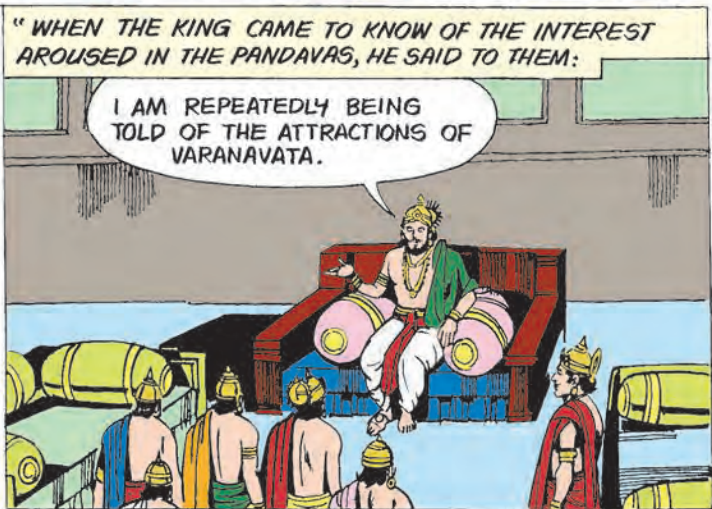
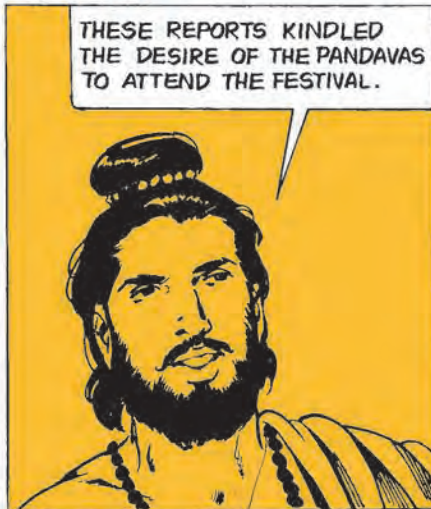




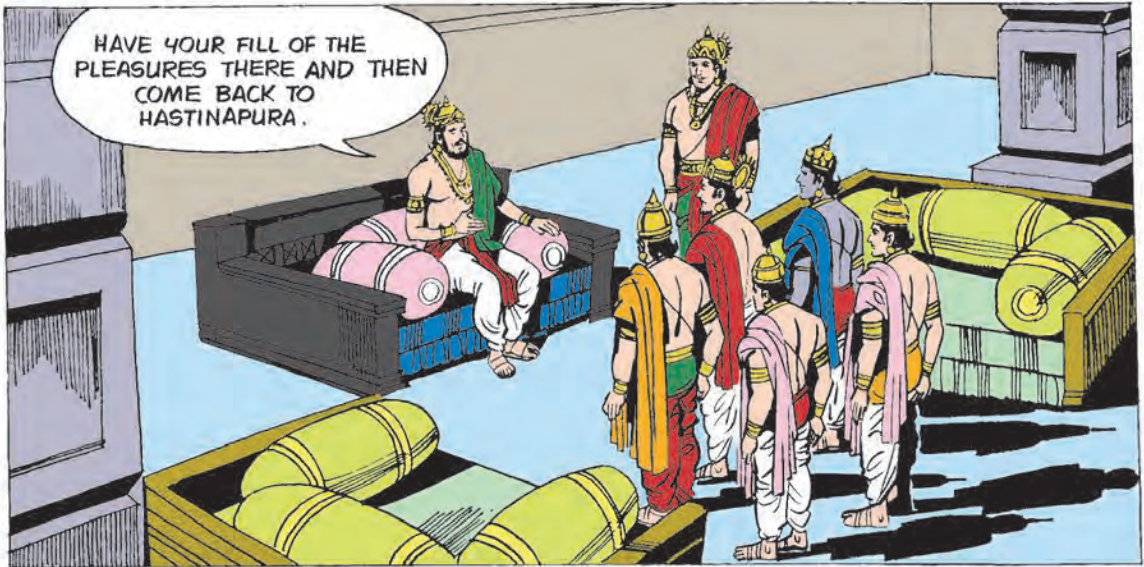












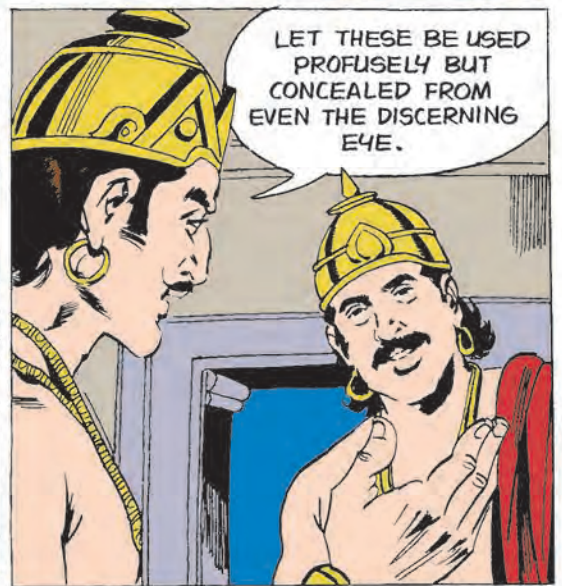
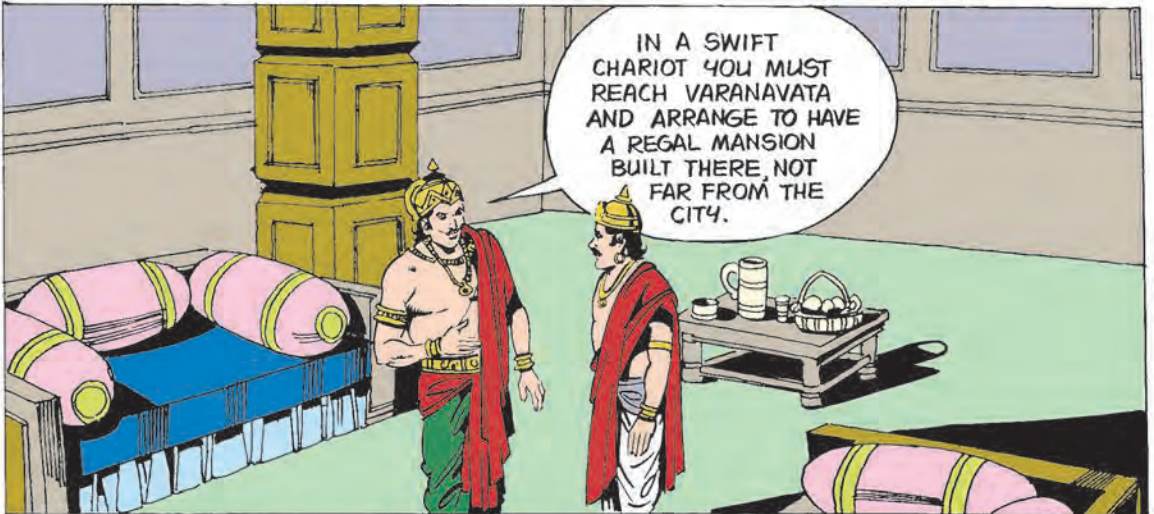
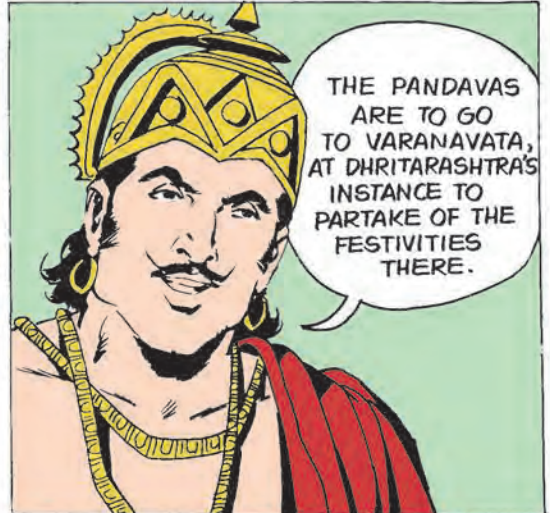
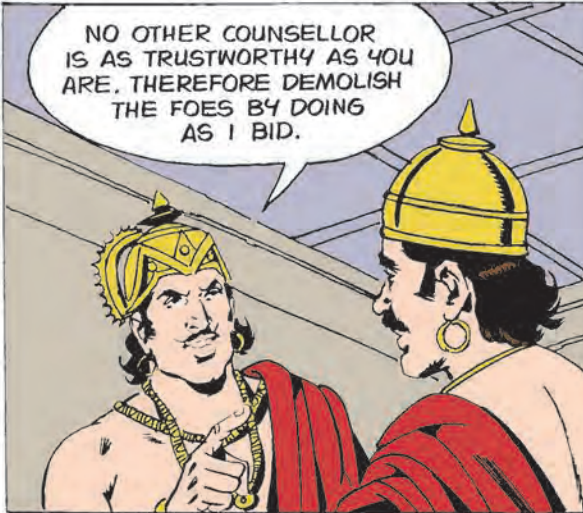
"YUDHISHTHIRA SAW THROUGH THE EAGERNESS OF DHRTIRASHTRA BUT KNOWING HIMSELF TO BE POWERLESS SAID:



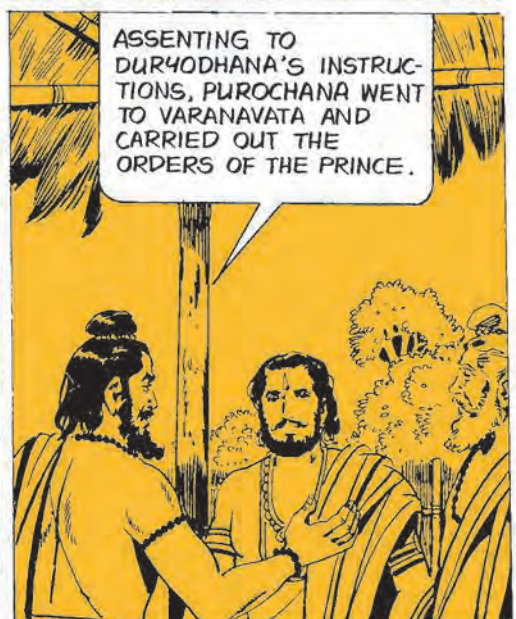
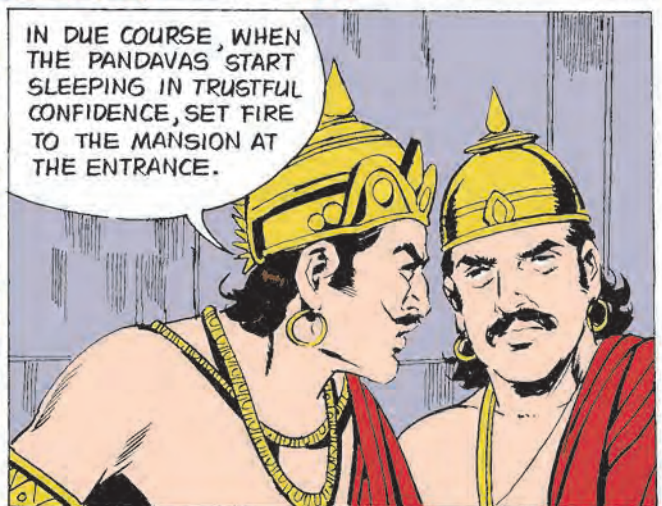
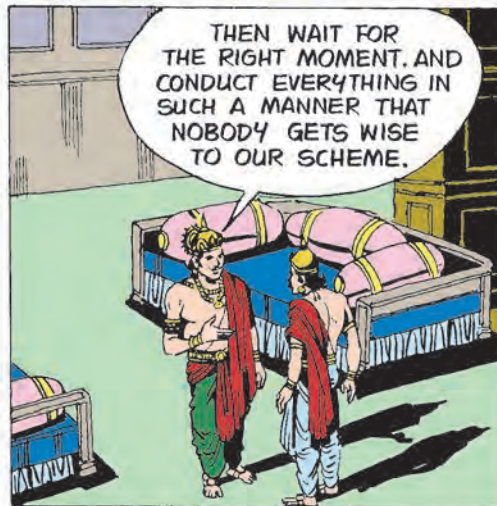
"DURYODHANA THEN SECRETLY SUMMONED PUROCHANA, A TRUSTED COUNSELLOR, AND SAID:







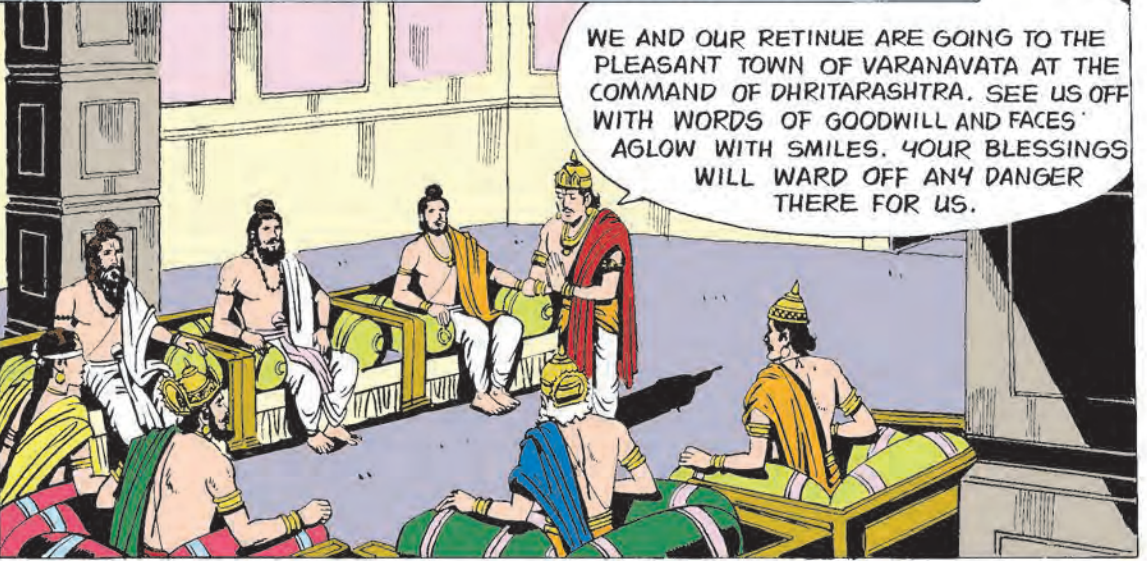






"MEANWHILE ADDRESSING BHEESHMA, VIDURA AND DRONA AND KRIPA AND ASHWATTHAMA AND GANDHARI, YUDHISHTHIRA SAID IN ALL HUMILITY:

WE AND OUR RETINUE ARE GOING TO THE PLEASANT TOWN OF VARANAVATA AT THE COMMAND OF DHRTARASHTRA. SEE US OFF WITH WORDS OF GOODWILL AND FACES AGLOW WITH SMILES. YOUR BLESSINGS WILL WARD OFF ANY DANGER THERE FOR US.



"THE KURU ELDERS, PLEASED IN MIND, BLESSED THEM SAYING:

LET ALL THE ELEMENTS BE FAVOURABLE TO YOU ON YOUR WAY. NOTHING INCLEMENT SHALL BEFALL YOU.

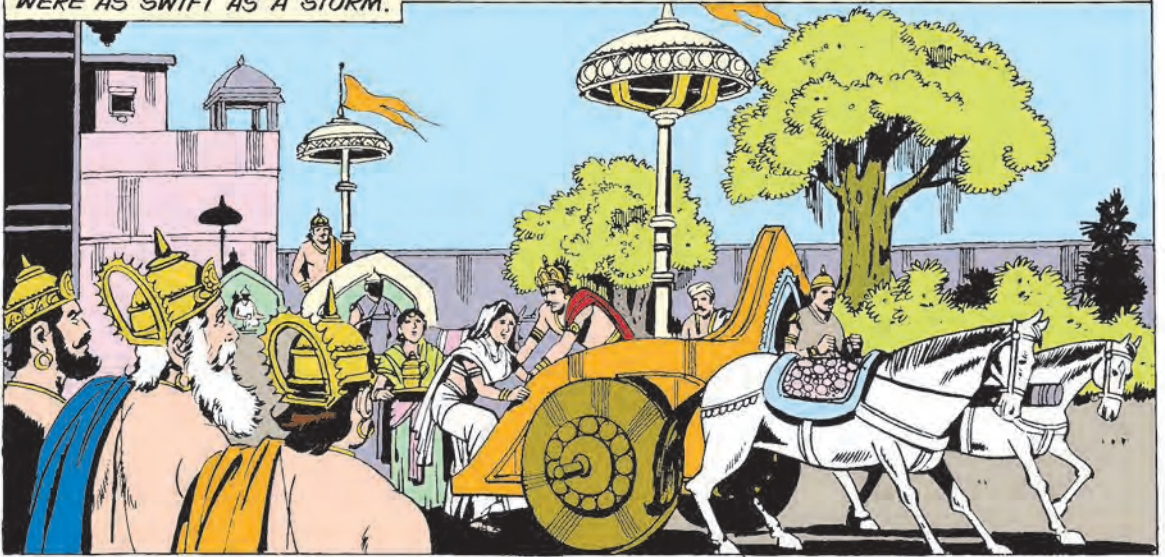


THEN THE PANDAVAS BADE FAREWELL TO THE ELDERS, EMBRACED THEIR CONFRERES, ACCEPTED THE COURTEOUS REGARD OF THE CHILDREN, CIRCUMAMBULATED THE VENERABLE LADIES, AND TOUCHED THE FEET OF BHEESHMA, DHRTARASHTRA, DRONA, KRIPA, VIDURA AND OTHER ELDERS.

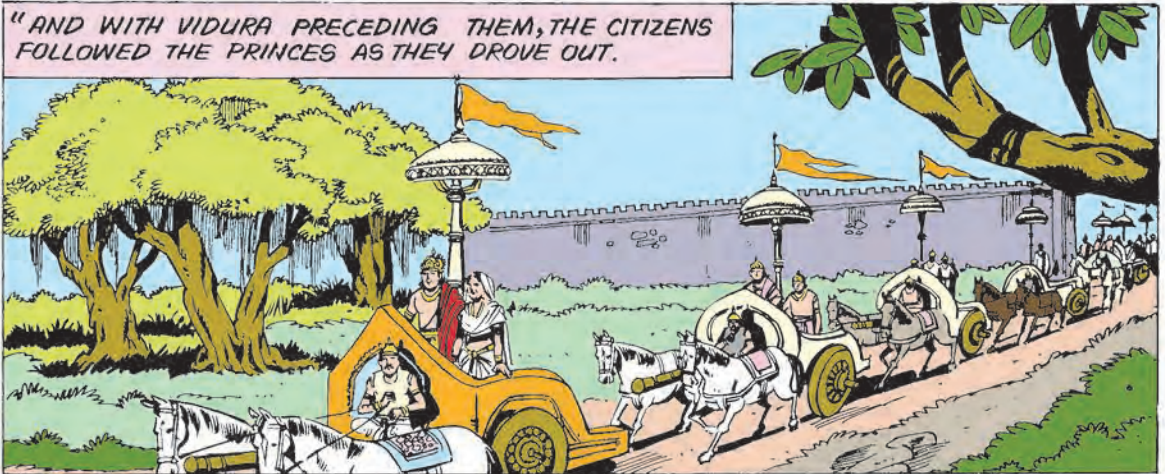




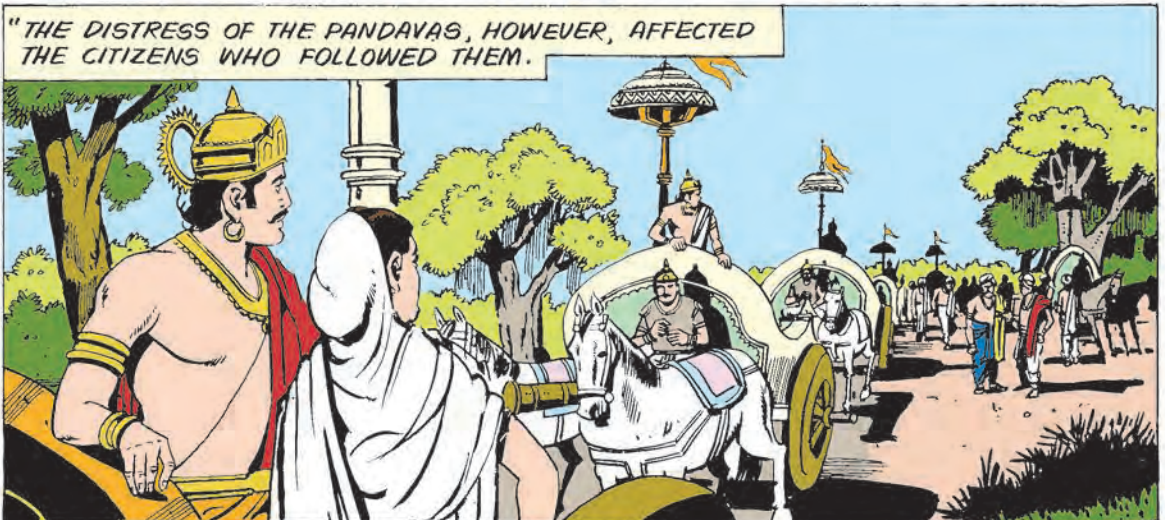
"THEN THE DISTRAUGHT PRINCES MOUNTED THEIR CHARIOTS WITH HORSES THAT WERE AS SWIFT AS A STORM."



"AND WITH VIDURA PRECEDING THEM, THE CITIZENS FOLLOWED THE PRINCES AS THEY DROVE OUT."



"THE DISTRESS OF THE PANDAVAS, HOWEVER, AFFECTED THE CITIZENS WHO FOLLOWED THEM."





"AND THEY BEGAN TO SPEAK OUT:

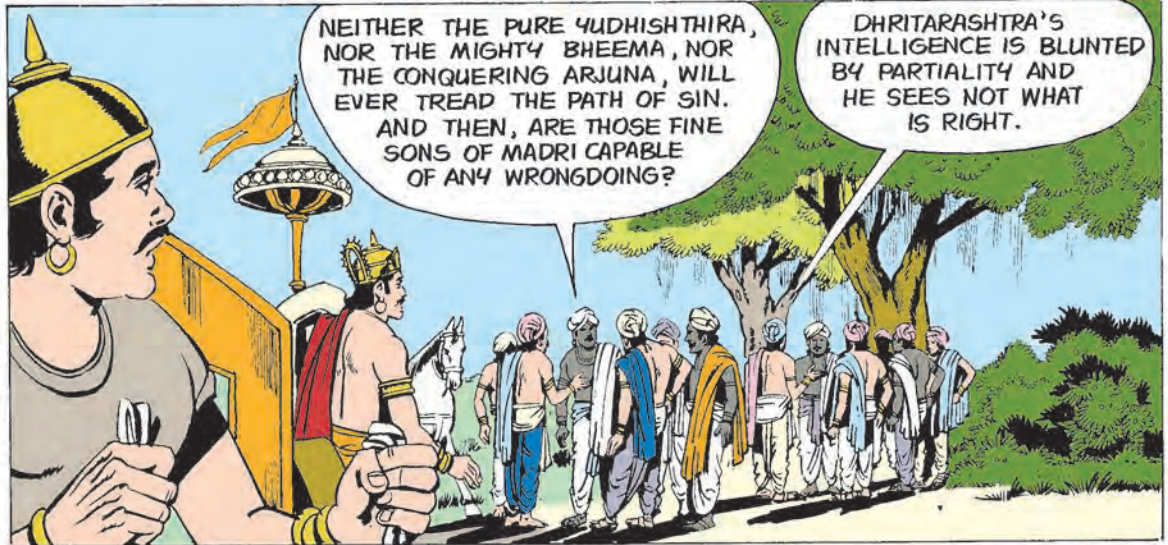
HOW DOES BHEESHMA  
SANCTION THE HEINOUS  
ACT OF CASTING THEM AWAY  
FROM THIS CITY TO A NON-  
DESCRIPT PLACE?

IN THE DAYS GONE BY OUR  
KINGS, VICHITRAVEERYA AND THEN  
PANDU, RULED OVER US WITH  
PATERNAL CARE. NOW PANDU IS  
DEAD, DHRTARASHTRA  
RESENTS PANDU'S CHILDREN  
FOR THE KINGDOM THEY  
HAVE INHERITED.

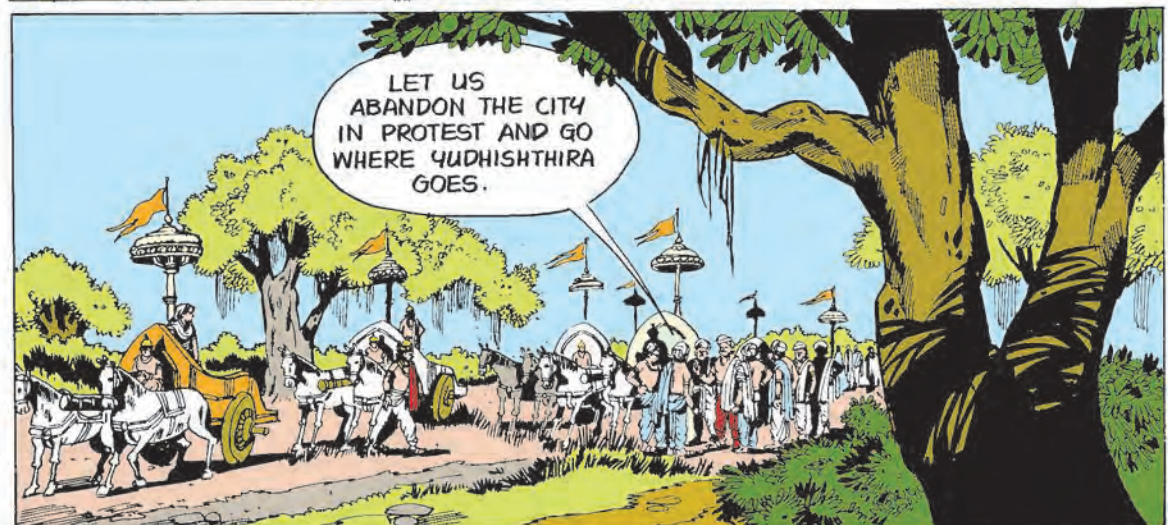


NEITHER THE PURE YUDHISHTHIRA,  
NOR THE MIGHTY BHEEMA, NOR  
THE CONQUERING ARJUNA, WILL  
EVER TREAD THE PATH OF SIN.  
AND THEN, ARE THOSE FINE  
SONS OF MADRI CAPABLE  
OF ANY WRONGDOING?

DHRTARASHTRA'S  
INTELLIGENCE IS BLUNTED  
BY PARTIALITY AND  
HE SEES NOT WHAT  
IS RIGHT.



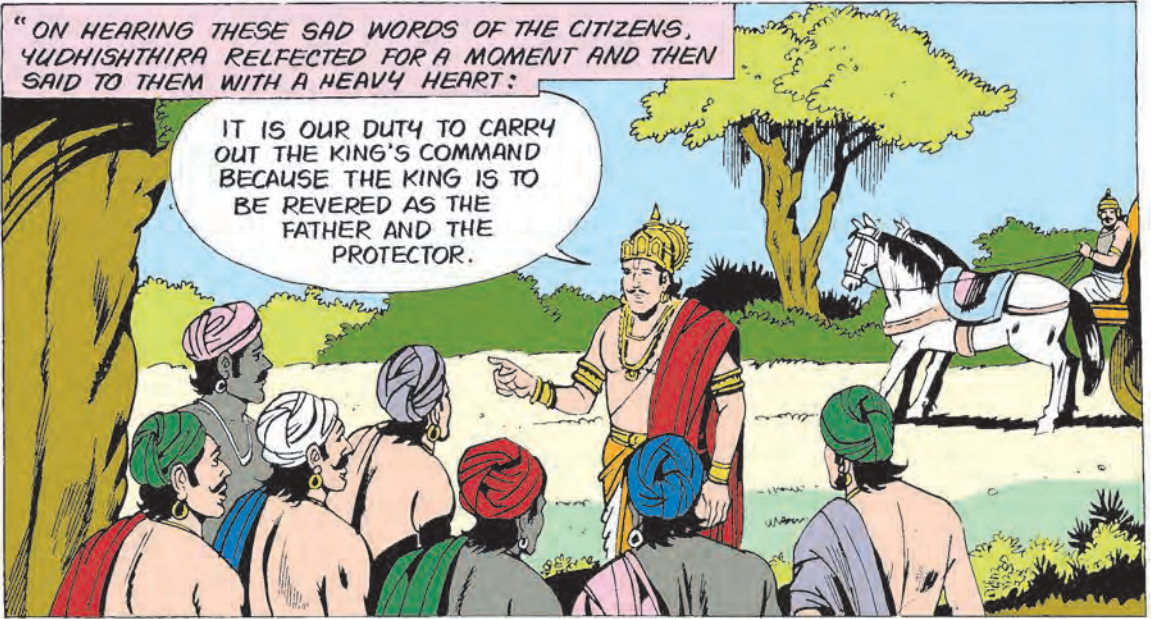
LET US  
ABANDON THE CITY  
IN PROTEST AND GO  
WHERE YUDHISHTHIRA  
GOES.





"ON HEARING THESE SAD WORDS OF THE CITIZENS, YUDHISHTHIRA REFLECTED FOR A MOMENT AND THEN SAID TO THEM WITH A HEAVY HEART:

IT IS OUR DUTY TO CARRY OUT THE KING'S COMMAND BECAUSE THE KING IS TO BE REVERED AS THE FATHER AND THE PROTECTOR.



YOU ARE OUR FRIENDS. LEAVE YOUR BLESSINGS WITH US AND RETURN TO YOUR HOMES.



AND AT THE OPPORTUNE MOMENT DO FOR US ALL THAT IS BENEFICIAL TO US.



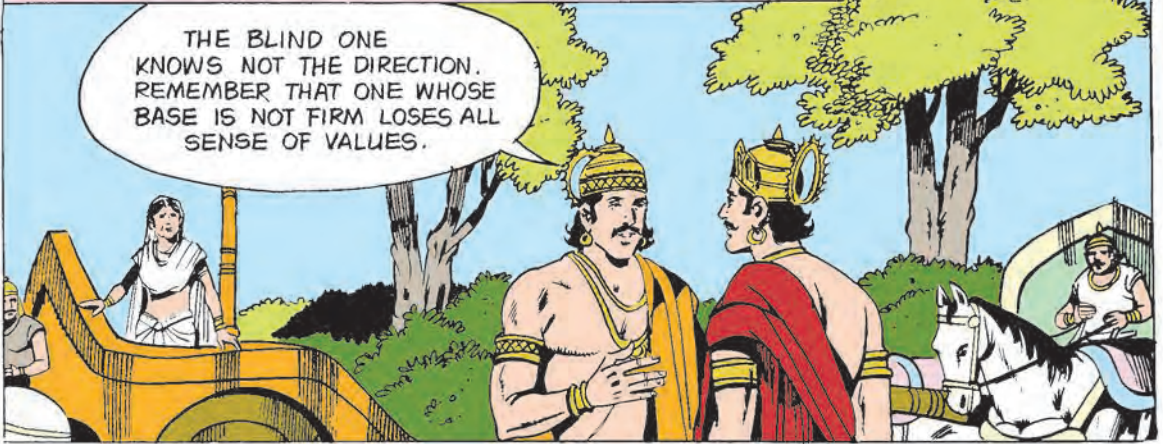
"AND THE CITIZENS TOOK LEAVE OF THEM AND RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES.



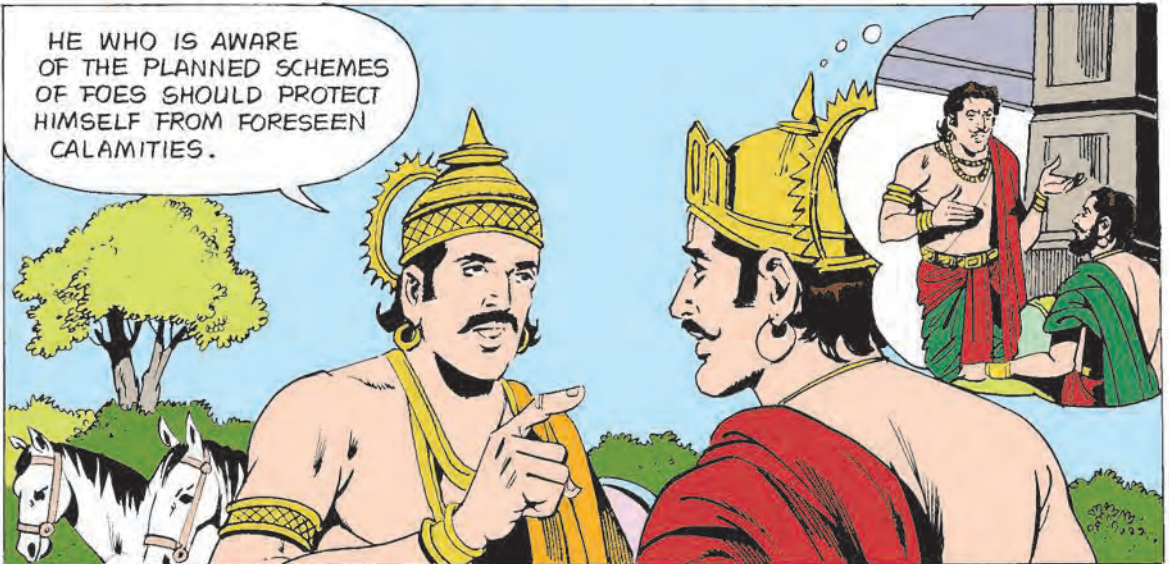


" AFTER THE CITIZENS HAD DEPARTED, THE WISE VIDURA SPOKE TO YUDHISHTHIRA IN THE DIALECT OF THE MLECHCHHAS WHICH WAS UNFAMILIAR TO ALL BUT YUDHISHTHIRA. HE SAID:

THE BLIND ONE  
KNOWS NOT THE DIRECTION.  
REMEMBER THAT ONE WHOSE  
BASE IS NOT FIRM LOSES ALL  
SENSE OF VALUES.



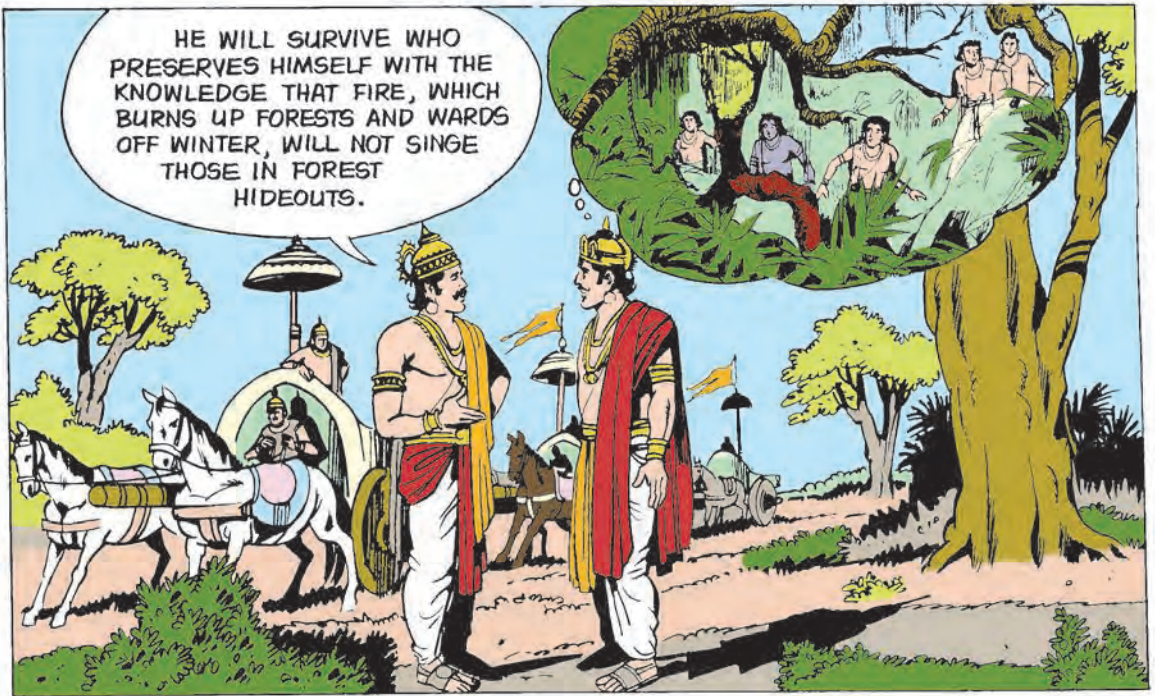
HE WHO IS AWARE  
OF THE PLANNED SCHEMES  
OF FOES SHOULD PROTECT  
HIMSELF FROM FORESEEN  
CALAMITIES.



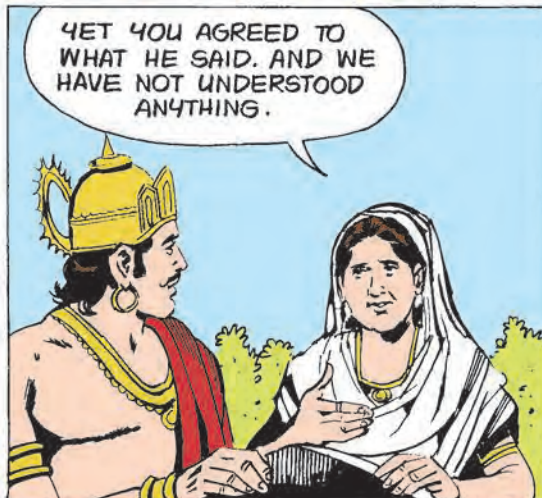
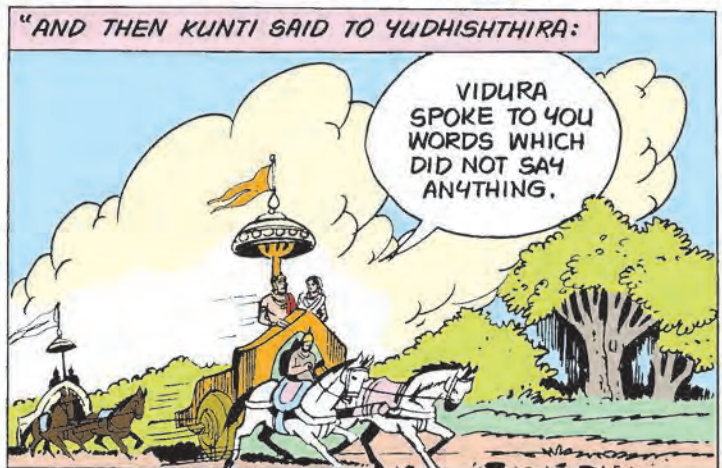
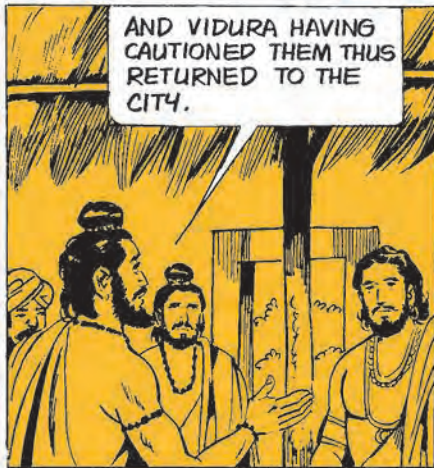
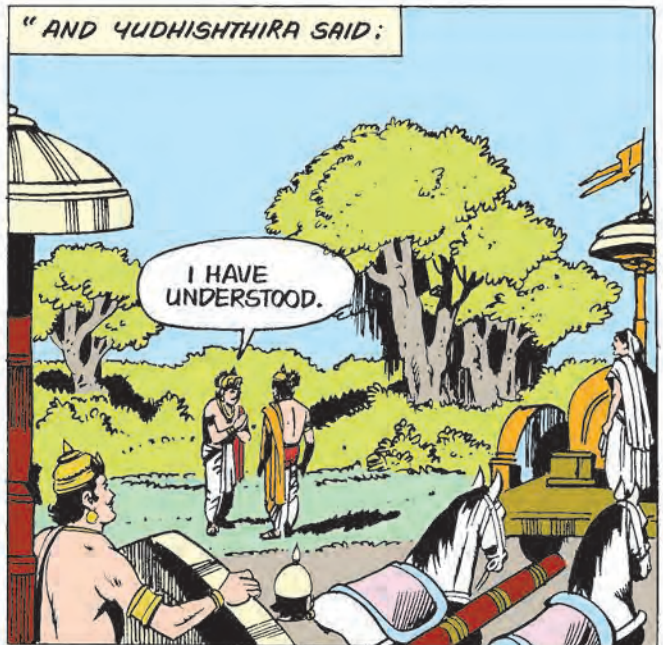
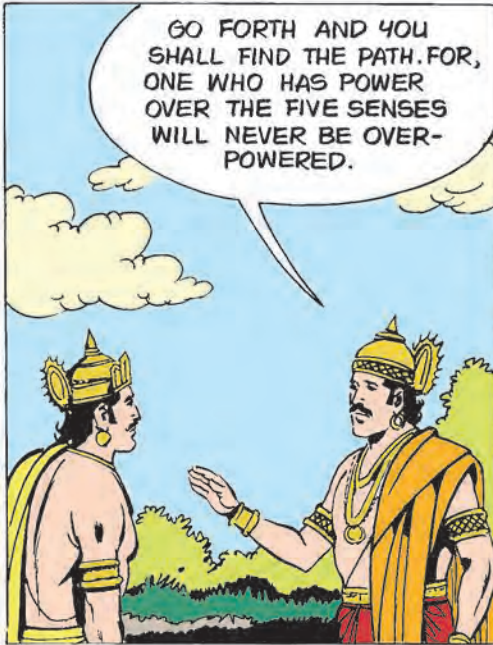
HE WHO ACTS IN  
THE KNOWLEDGE THAT  
IT IS NOT WEAPONS OF  
METAL ALONE THAT  
PROVE FATAL, STANDS  
BEYOND THE PALE OF  
DANGER.



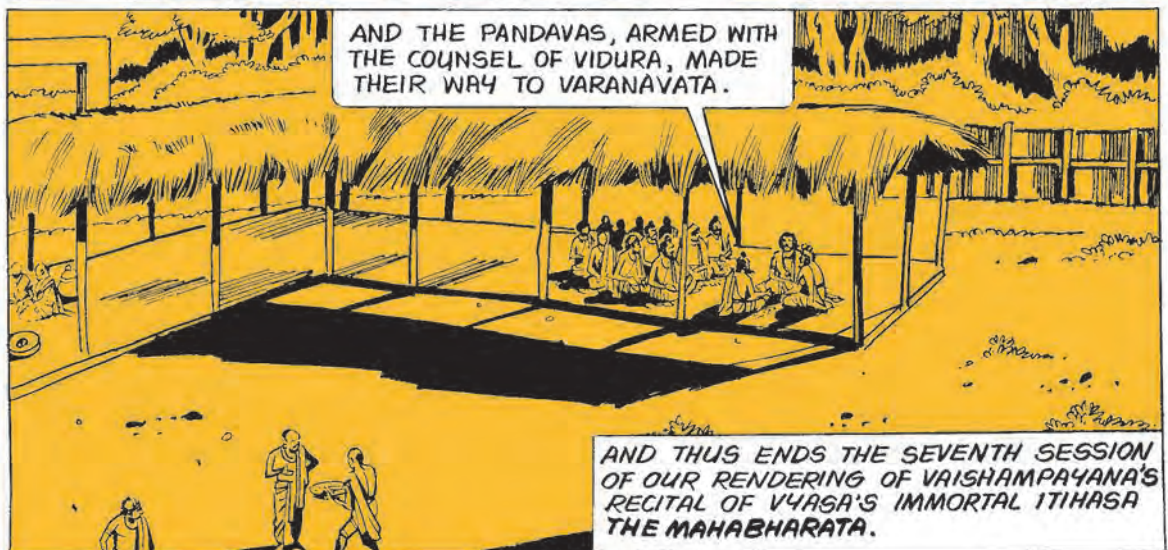
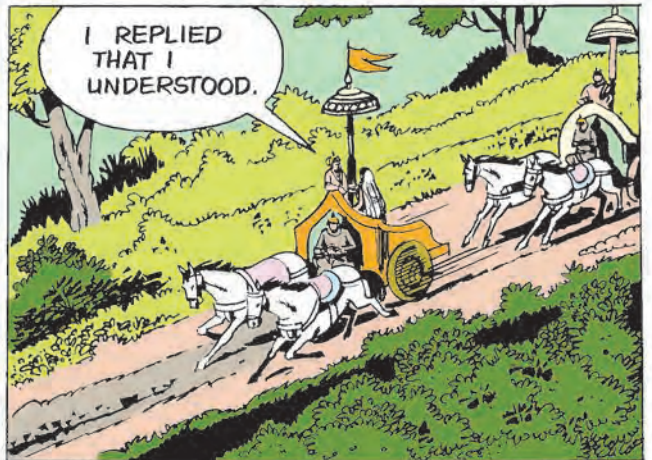
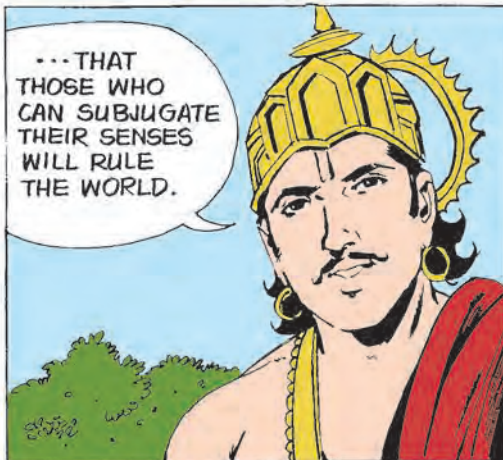
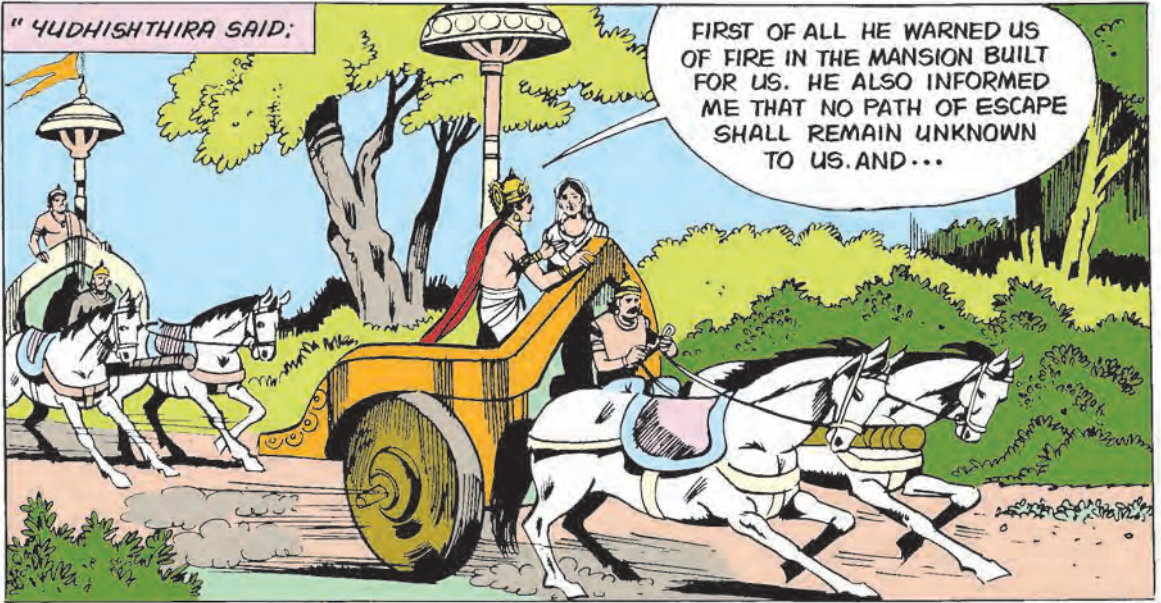














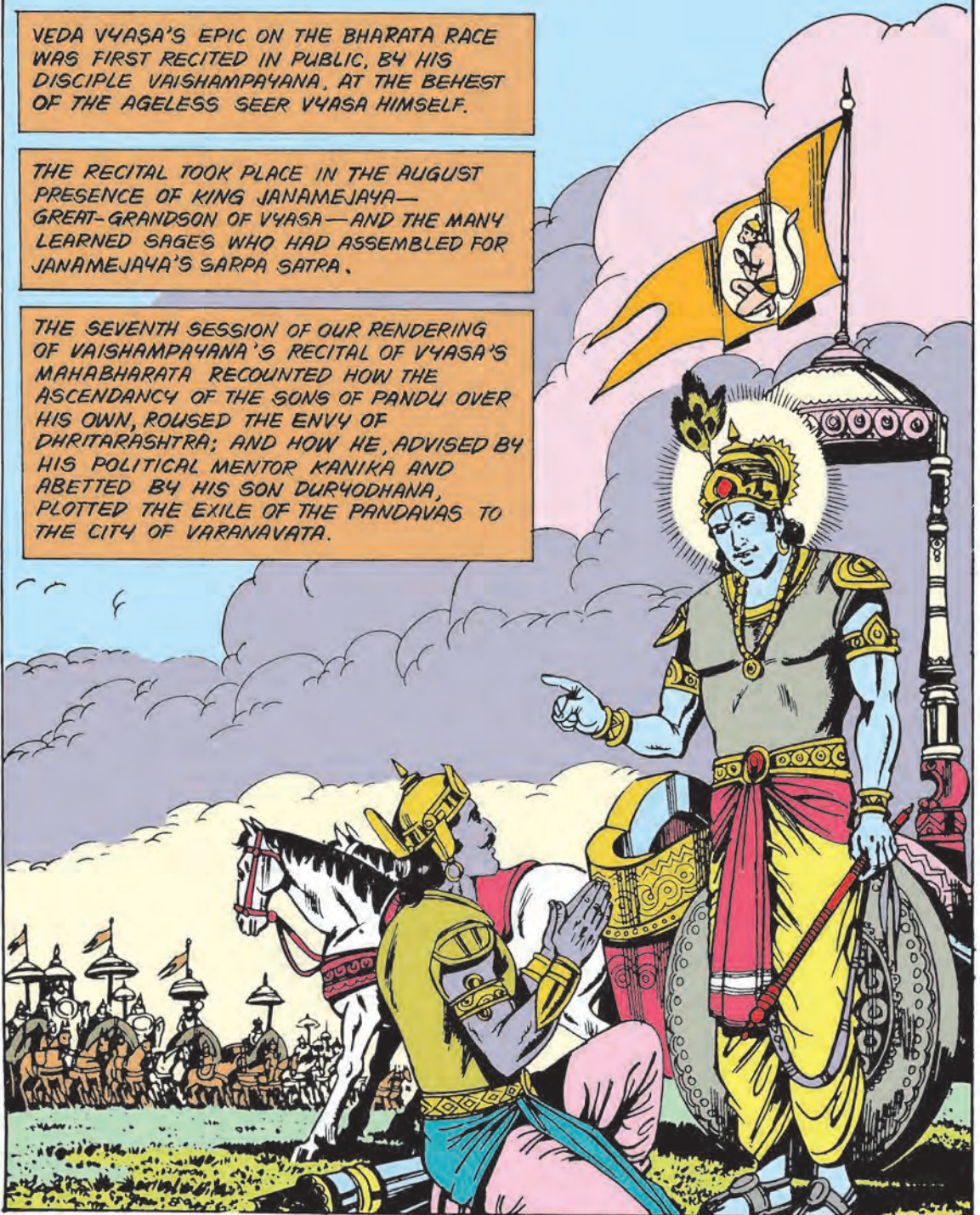
# Mahabharata-8

## THE ESCAPE

VEDA VYASA'S EPIC ON THE BHARATA RACE WAS FIRST RECITED IN PUBLIC, BY HIS DISCIPLE VAISHAMPAYANA, AT THE BEHEST OF THE AGELESS SEER VYASA HIMSELF.

THE RECITAL TOOK PLACE IN THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF KING JANAMEJAYA— GREAT-GRANDSON OF VYASA—AND THE MANY LEARNED SAGES WHO HAD ASSEMBLED FOR JANAMEJAYA'S SARPA SATRA.

THE SEVENTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S MAHABHARATA RECOUNTED HOW THE ASCENDANCY OF THE SONS OF PANDU OVER HIS OWN, ROUSED THE ENVY OF DHRTIRASHTRA; AND HOW HE, ADVISED BY HIS POLITICAL MENTOR KANIKA AND ABETTED BY HIS SON DURYODHANA, PLOTTED THE EXILE OF THE PANDAVAS TO THE CITY OF VARANAVATA.

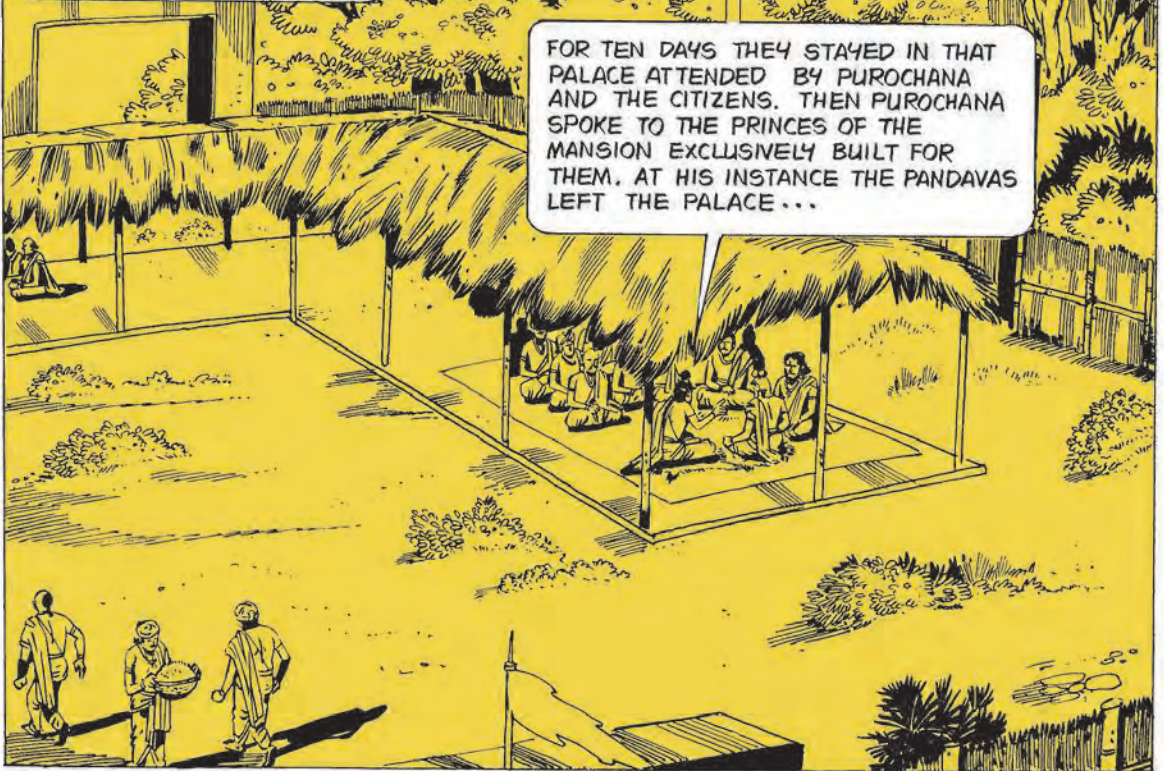




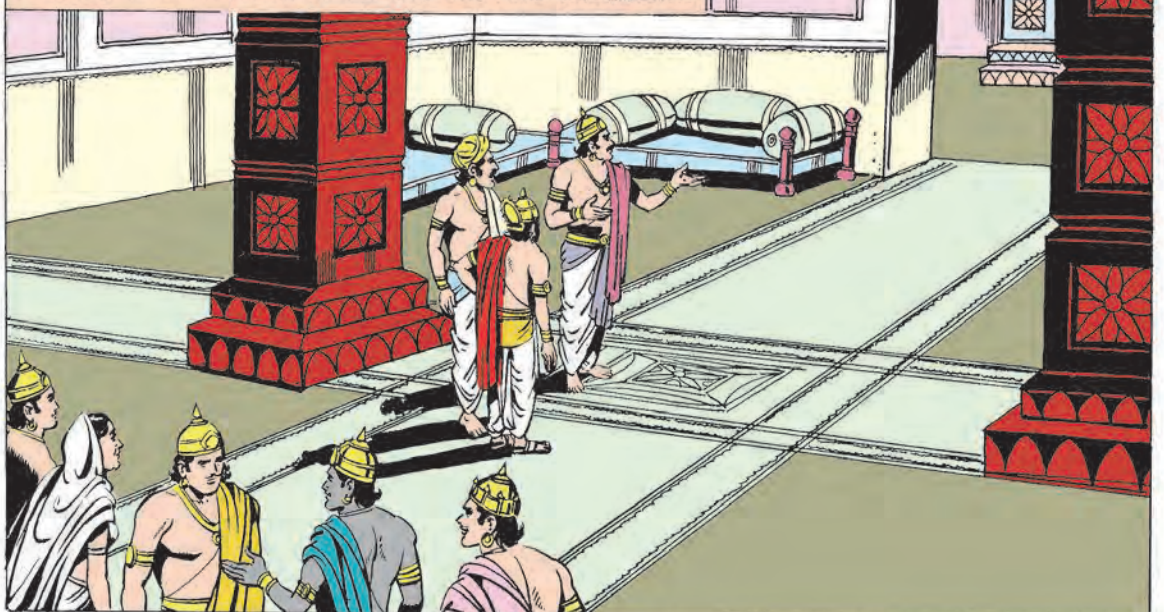
AS THE PANDAVAS ARRIVED AT VARANAVATA, THEY WERE WELCOMED JOYFULLY AND CEREMONIALLY BY THE PEOPLE THERE, AND THE ENTIRE CITY WENT GAY.

THE PANDAVAS RECIPROCATED BY VISITING THE HOMES OF PEOPLE OF DIVERSE STATIONS. THEN PUROCHANA LED THEM TO A PALACE.

FOR TEN DAYS THEY STAYED IN THAT PALACE ATTENDED BY PUROCHANA AND THE CITIZENS. THEN PUROCHANA SPOKE TO THE PRINCES OF THE MANSION EXCLUSIVELY BUILT FOR THEM. AT HIS INSTANCE THE PANDAVAS LEFT THE PALACE...



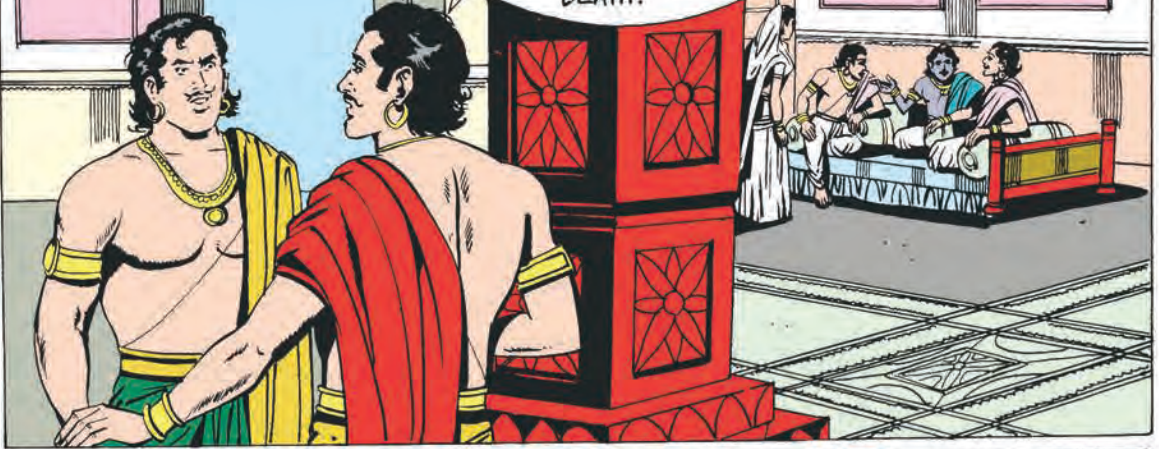
"...AND ENTERED THE MANSION. AND YUDHISHTHIRA SENSING THE AROMA OF GHEE AND FAT AND LACQUER..."





“...LATER SAID TO BHEEMA:

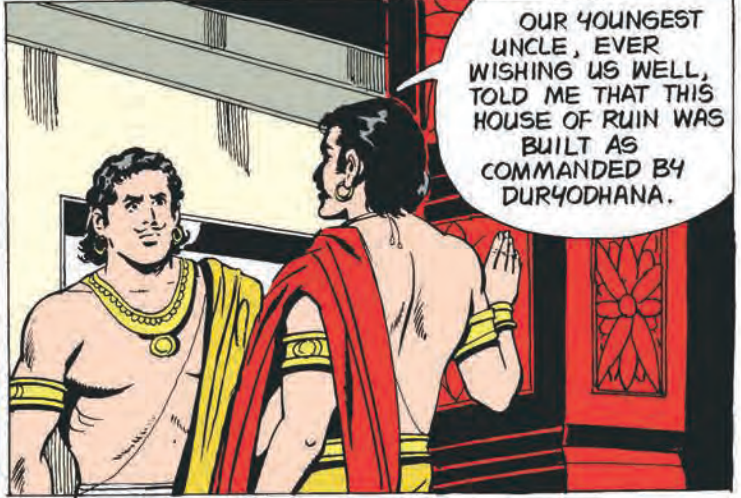
THIS HOUSE IS BUILT OF INFLAMMABLE MATERIALS. PUROCHANA, THE WICKED HENCHMAN OF DURYODHANA, IS WAITING TO BURN ME TO DEATH.



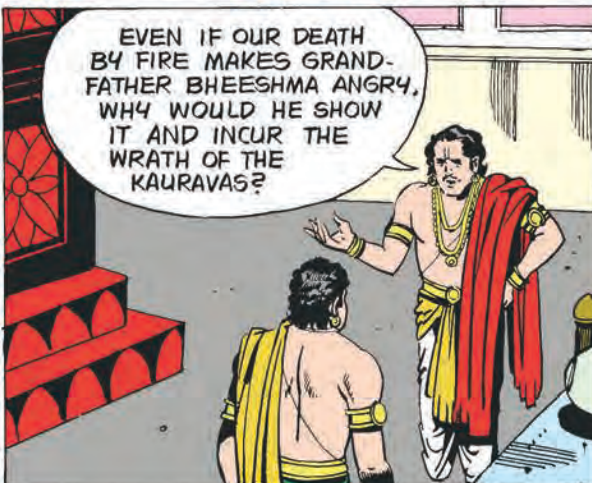
WISE VIDURA KNEW OF IT AND HAD WARNED ME ABOUT IT.



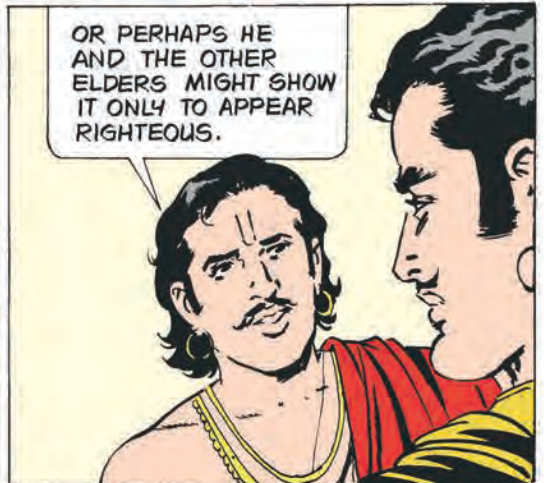
OUR YOUNGEST UNCLE, EVER WISHING US WELL, TOLD ME THAT THIS HOUSE OF RUIN WAS BUILT AS COMMANDED BY DURYODHANA.



EVEN IF OUR DEATH BY FIRE MAKES GRAND-FATHER BHEESHMA ANGRY, WHY WOULD HE SHOW IT AND INCUR THE WRATH OF THE KAURAVAS?



OR PERHAPS HE AND THE OTHER ELDERS MIGHT SHOW IT ONLY TO APPEAR RIGHTEOUS.





"THEN BHEEMA SAID:

IF YOU KNOW THIS  
TO BE AN INFLAMMABLE  
HOUSE, LET US RETURN  
TO THE PALACE  
WHERE WE FIRST  
STAYED.

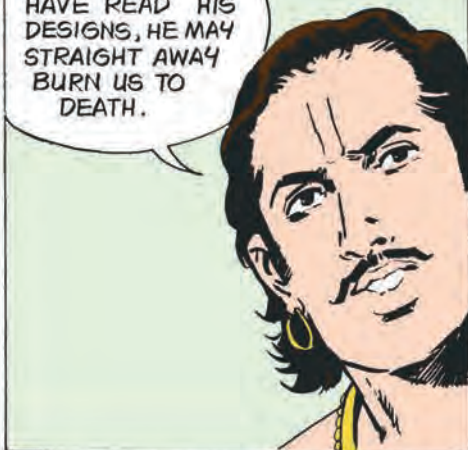


"AND YUDHISHTHIRA REPLIED:

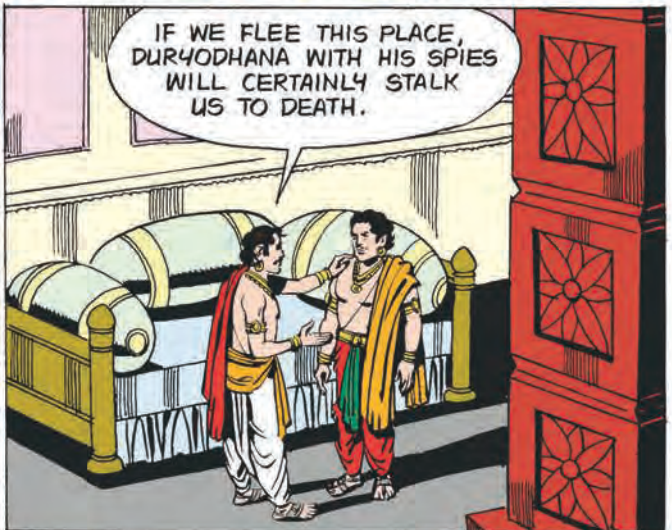
I THINK WE SHOULD  
CONTINUE TO LIVE HERE  
SIMULATING INNOCENCE  
AND YET BE CAUTIOUS  
AND ALERT.



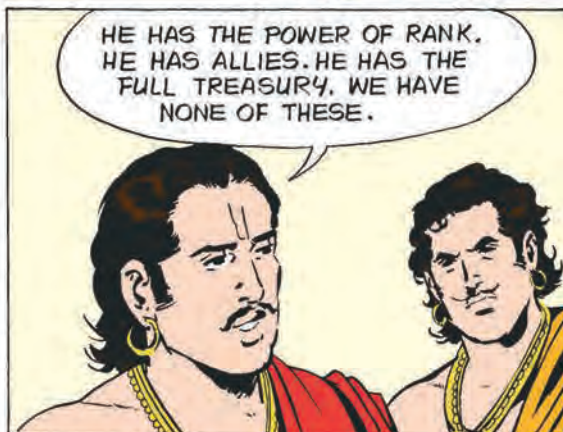
IF PUROCHANA  
KNOWS THAT WE  
HAVE READ HIS  
DESIGNS, HE MAY  
STRAIGHT AWAY  
BURN US TO  
DEATH.



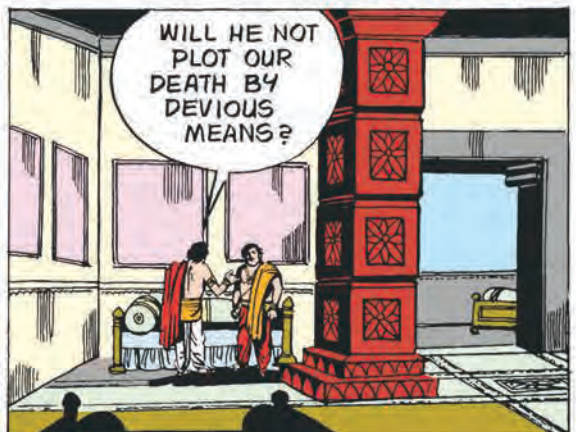
IF WE FLEE THIS PLACE,  
DURYODHANA WITH HIS SPIES  
WILL CERTAINLY STALK  
US TO DEATH.



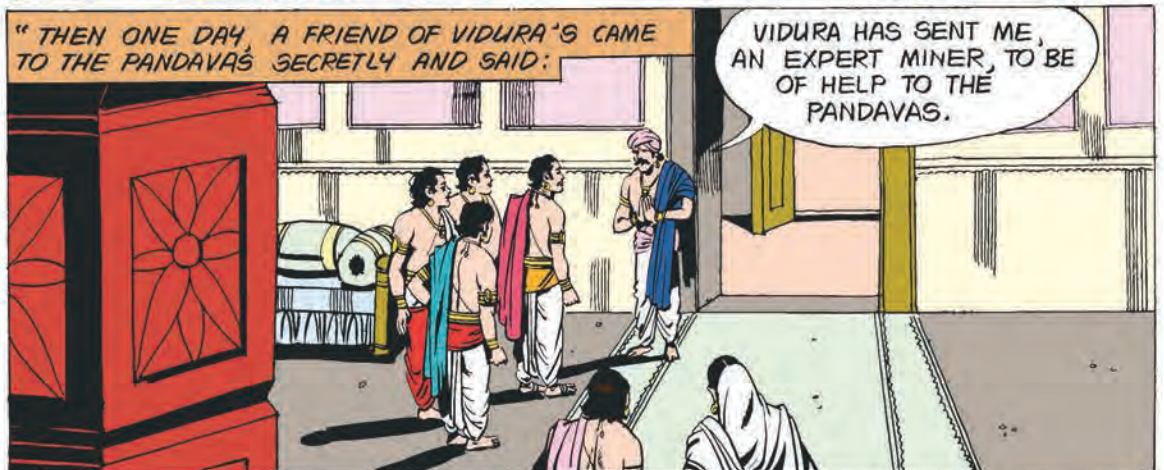
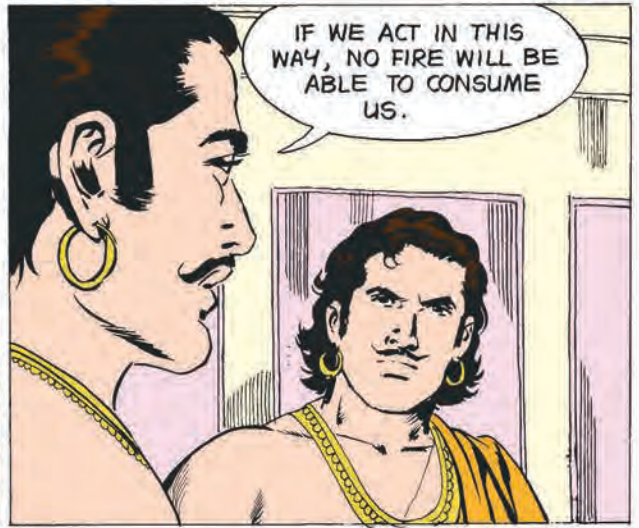
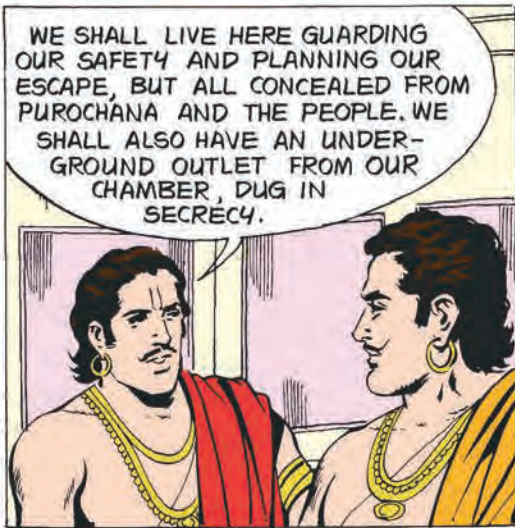
HE HAS THE POWER OF RANK.  
HE HAS ALLIES. HE HAS THE  
FULL TREASURY. WE HAVE  
NONE OF THESE.



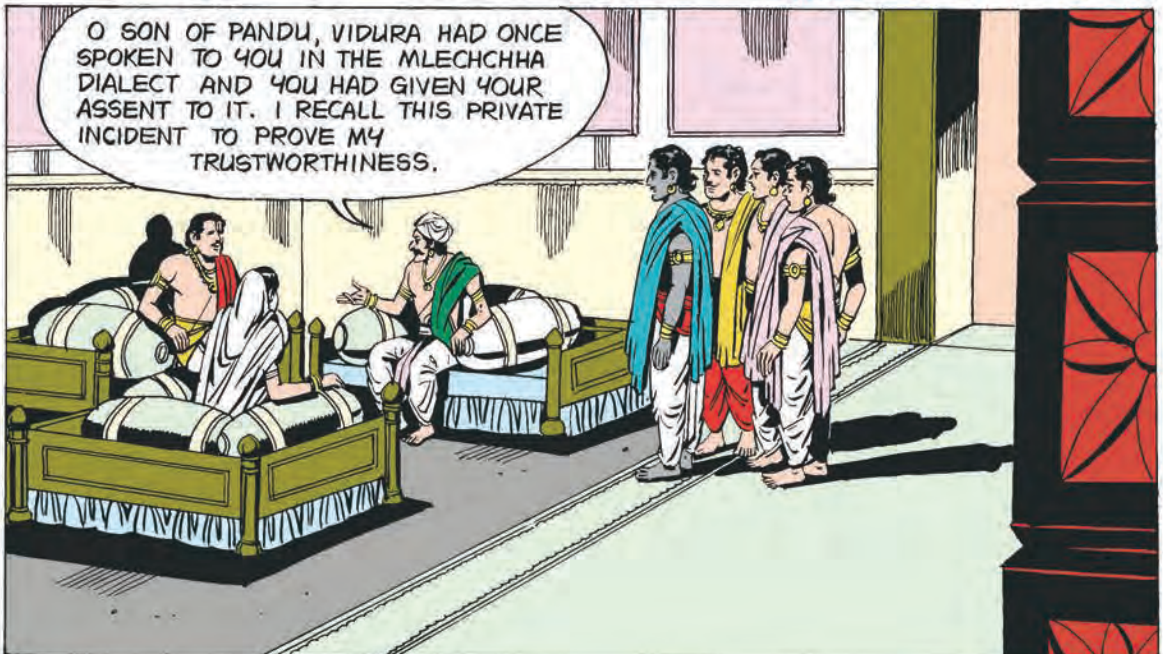
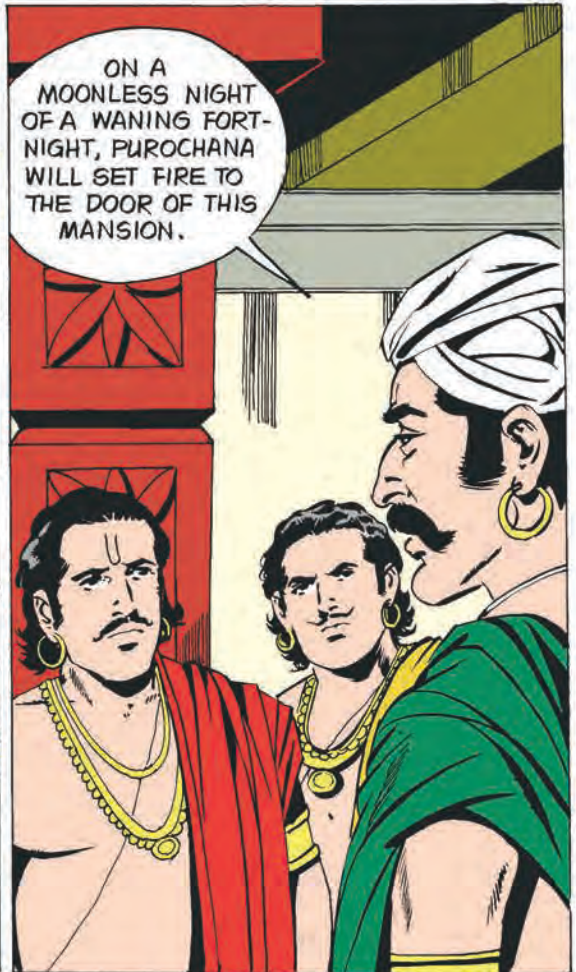
WILL HE NOT  
PLOT OUR  
DEATH BY  
DEVIOUS  
MEANS?













"HEARING HIS WORDS, YUDHISHTHIRA SAID:

I NOW KNOW YOU TO  
BE VIDURA'S FAITHFUL FRIEND.  
LOOK AFTER US AS VIDURA  
ALWAYS DOES.



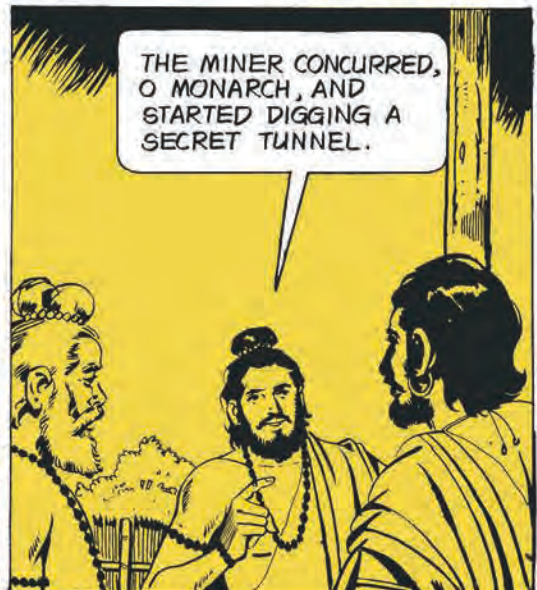
RESCUE US FROM THE  
DISASTER OF WHICH VIDURA  
HAD SPOKEN AND WHICH  
IS AT OUR DOOR  
NOW.



O SAVE US WITHOUT  
THE KNOWLEDGE OF  
PUROCHANA.

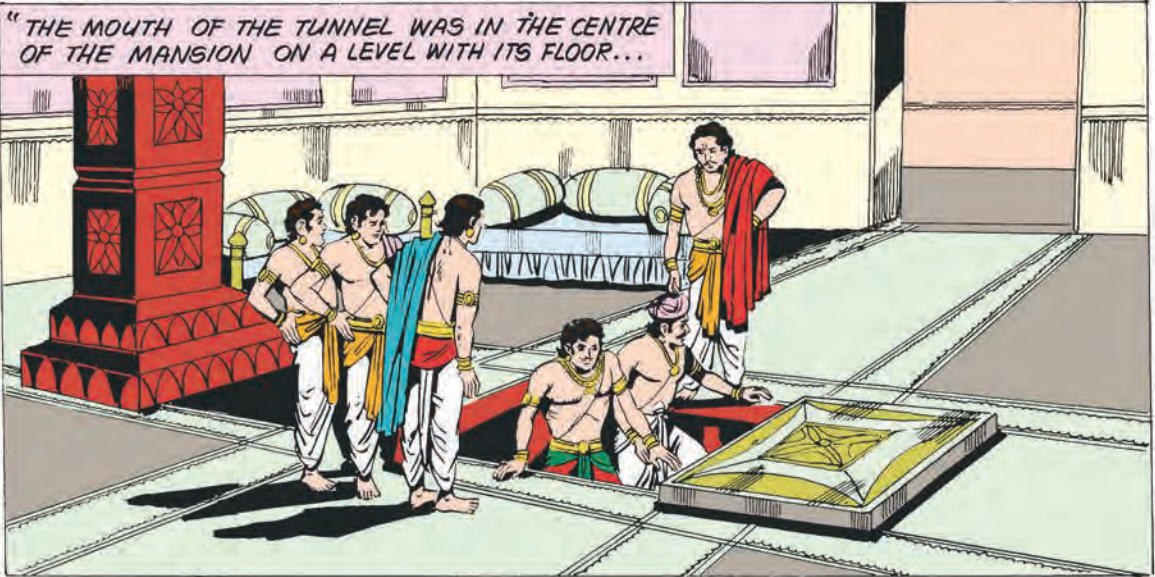


THE MINER CONCURRED,  
O MONARCH, AND  
STARTED DIGGING A  
SECRET TUNNEL.

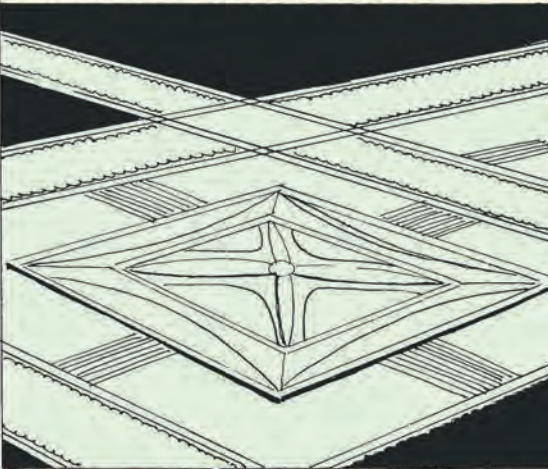




"THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL WAS IN THE CENTRE OF THE MANSION ON A LEVEL WITH ITS FLOOR..."



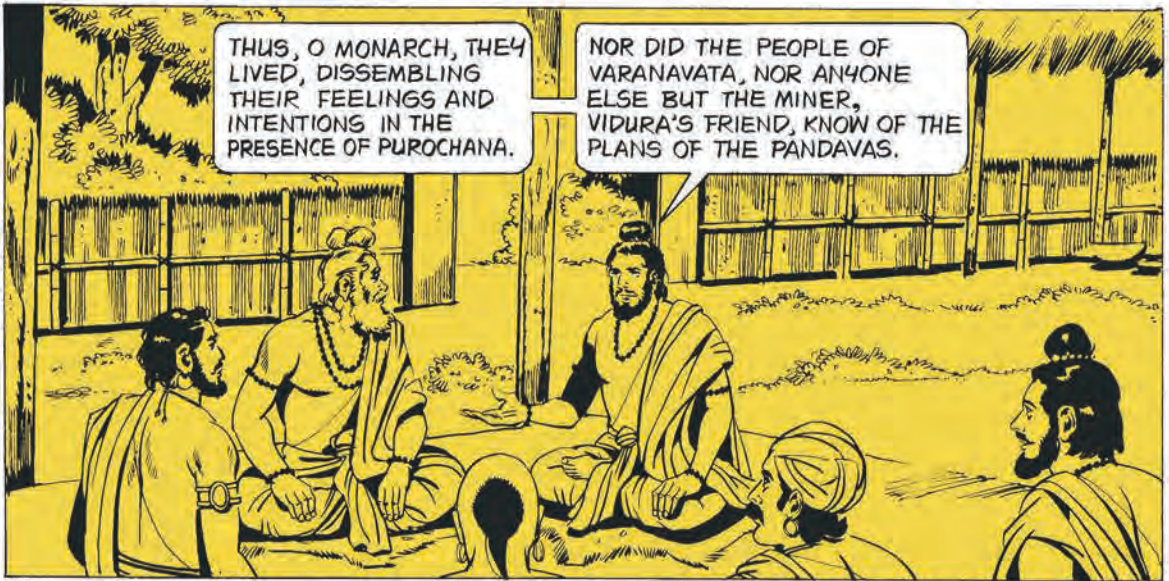
"...AND WAS COVERED AND CONCEALED."



"AT NIGHT THE PANDAVAS, READY WITH THEIR WEAPONS, SLEPT WITHIN. AND DURING THE DAY THEY WENT A-HUNTING FROM FOREST TO FOREST."



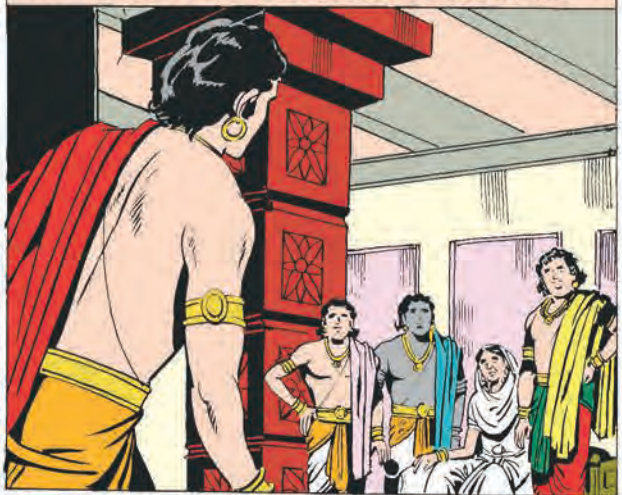




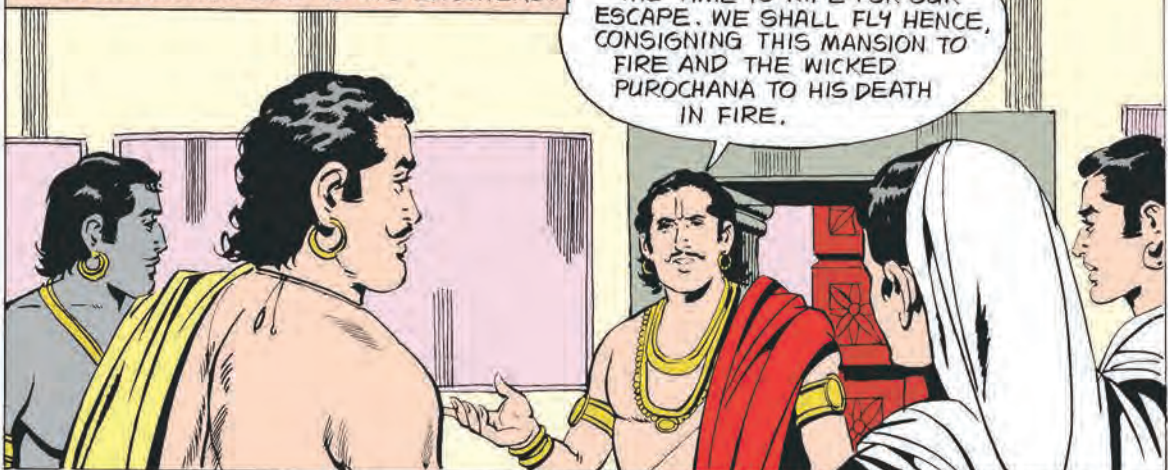
"AND THUS DID THE PANDAVAS LIVING IN FEIGNED CHEER WIN THE CONFIDENCE OF PUROCHANA.



"AND BEHOLDING THE GLEEFUL PUROCHANA...

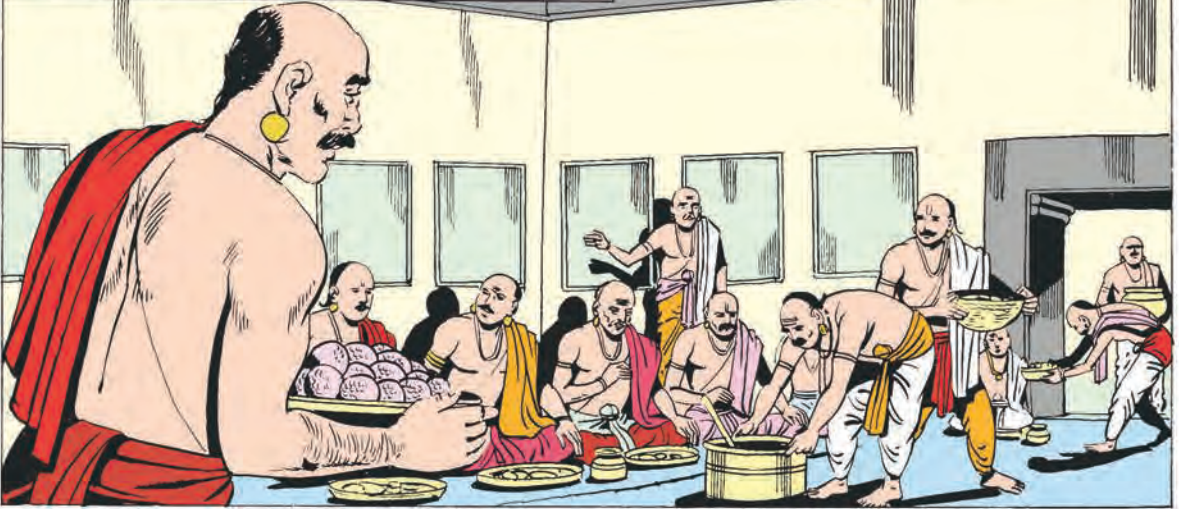


"...YUDHISHTHIRA SAID TO HIS BROTHERS:

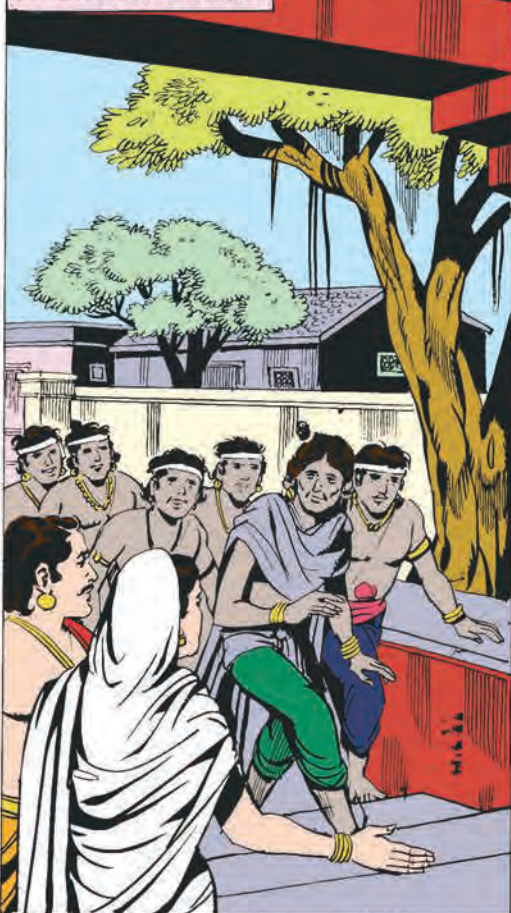




"THEN DURING AN ALMSGIVING RITUAL, KUNTI ARRANGED TO HAVE BRAHMANAS FED."



"SEEKING FOOD, A NISHADA WOMAN AND HER FIVE SONS CAME THERE, PROMPTED AS IT WERE BY A DESTINY OF DOOM."



"O MONARCH, THE SIX OF THEM, SENSELESS WITH A SURFEIT OF WINE, SLEPT INSIDE THE MANSION LIKE THE DEAD."

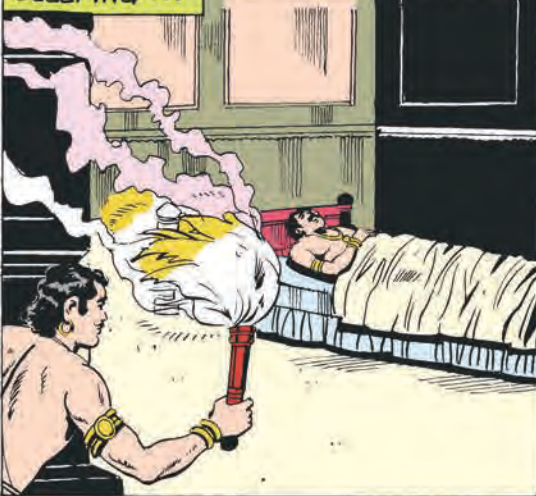




"AND IN THE NIGHT, WHEN ALL WERE ASLEEP, AND WHEN STRONG WINDS WERE BLOWING..."



"...BHEEMA SET FIRE TO THAT PART OF THE MANSION WHERE PUROCHANA LAY SLEEPING..."



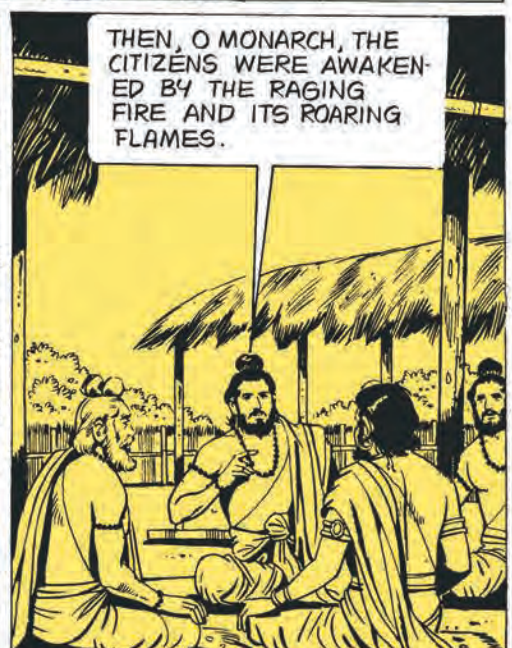
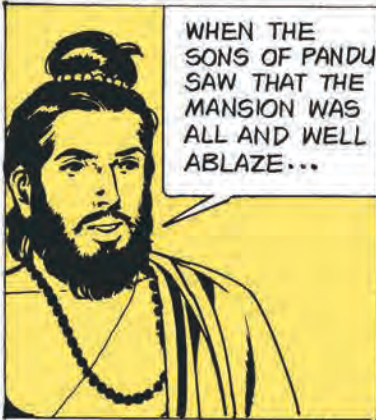
"...AND THEN, TO ITS ENTRANCE..."



"...AND THEN, TO ITS VARIOUS PARTS."









"BEHOLDING THE BURNING MANSION WITH RUEFUL  
FACES, THEY STARTED WAILING LOUDLY:

THIS  
INDEED WAS  
DONE BY  
DURYODHANA  
TO DESTROY  
THE PANDAVAS.

BEYOND  
ANY DOUBT,  
THE PANDAVAS  
WERE CAST IN  
THE FIRE BY  
DURYODHANA,  
WITH THE  
KNOWLEDGE OF  
DHRTARASHTRA.

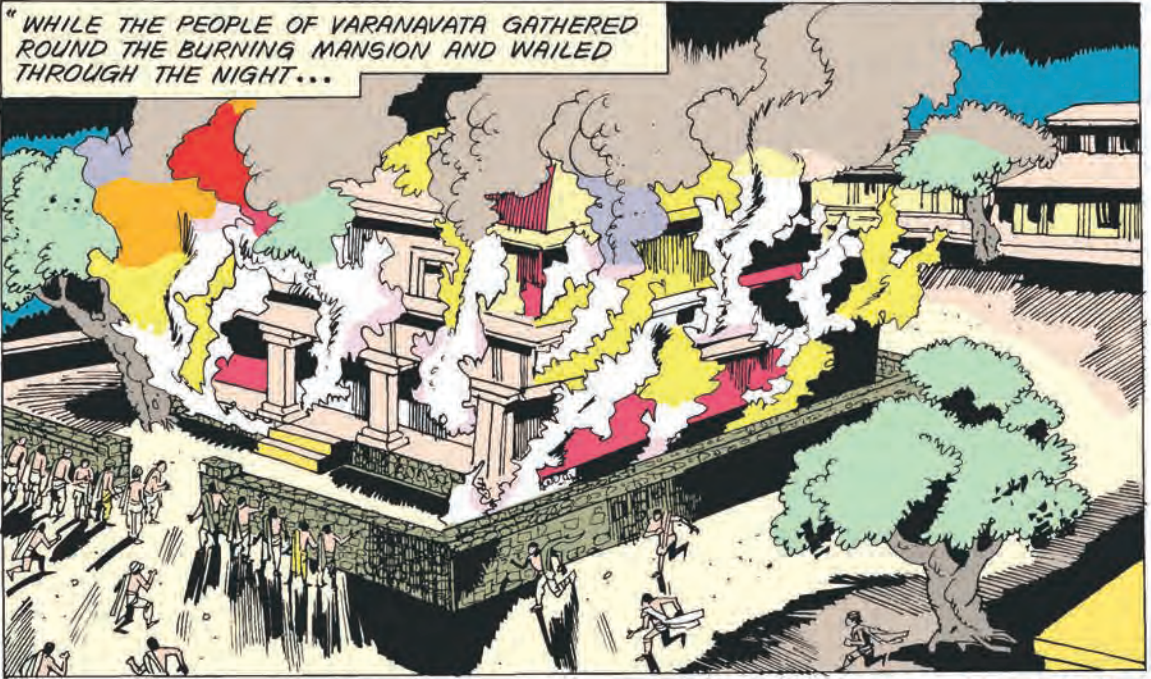
WOE BE TO  
DHRTARASHTRA  
WHO THREW THE  
HEIRS OF PANDU  
TO THE FIRE AS  
IF THEY WERE  
HIS FOES!

IT IS A PITY  
THAT EVEN  
BHEESHMA  
AND DRONA AND  
KRIPA HAVE BEEN  
BLIND TO  
DUTY.





"WHILE THE PEOPLE OF VARANAVATA GATHERED  
ROUND THE BURNING MANSION AND WAILED  
THROUGH THE NIGHT..."



"...THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR MOTHER, WAN AND WEARY,  
TRUDGED THROUGH THE SECRET TUNNEL."



"BUT SLEEPLESS AND FRIGHTENED, THEY WERE  
UNABLE TO PROCEED FAR."





" THEN, O MONARCH, THE VALIANT  
BHEEMASENA, WITH HIS IMMENSE  
STRENGTH AND SPEED, CARRIED UPON  
HIMSELF HIS MOTHER AND HIS BROTHERS...



"... AND CONTINUED ON HIS WAY  
PUSHING THROUGH THE DARKNESS...



"... FELLING THE TREES WITH HIS CHEST AND SHAKING  
THE EARTH UNDER HIS FOOTFALL.





"AT THIS JUNCTURE THERE ARRIVED, IN THAT FOREST ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA, A TRUSTED SERVANT SENT BY THE FORESIGHTED VIDURA.



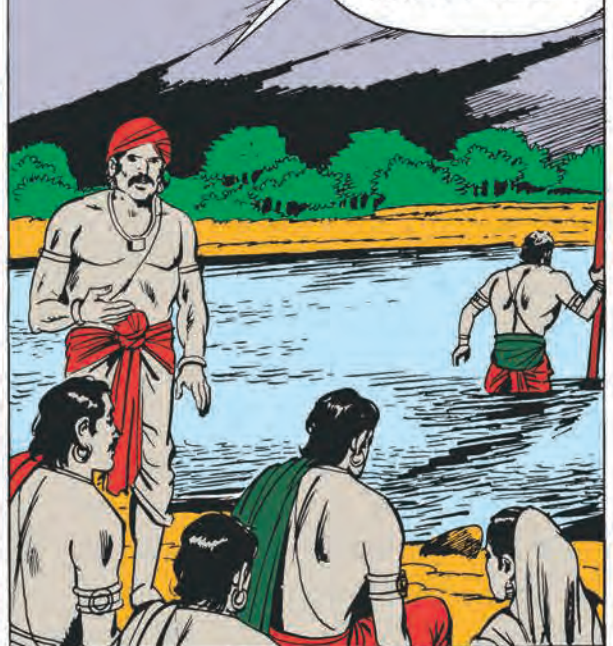
"HE CAME UPON THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR MOTHER CHECKING THE DEPTH OF THE WATER TO CROSS THE RIVER.



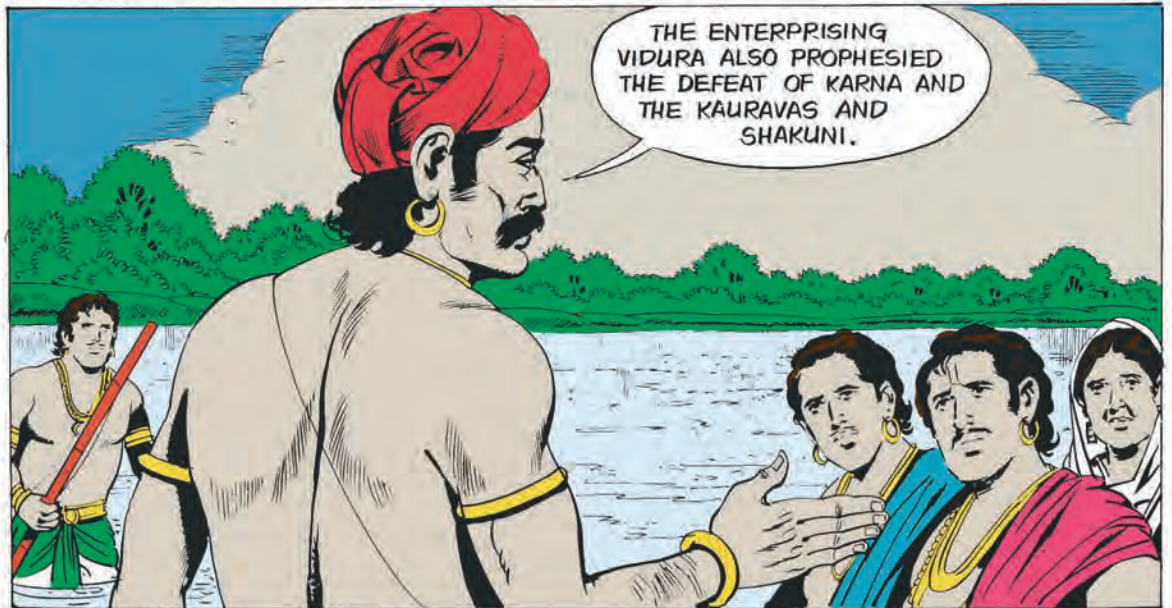
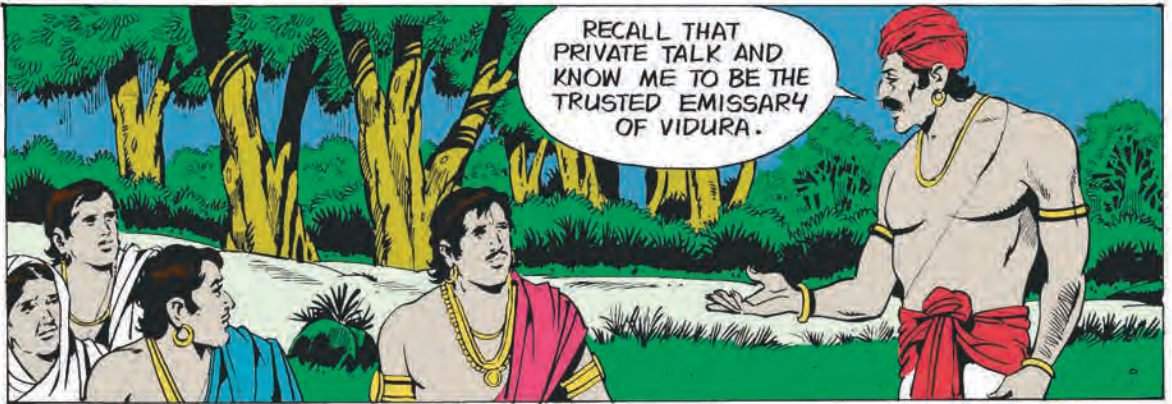
"HE SAID:

O YUDHISHTHIRA, HERE ARE THE WORDS SPOKEN TO YOU ONCE BY VIDURA.

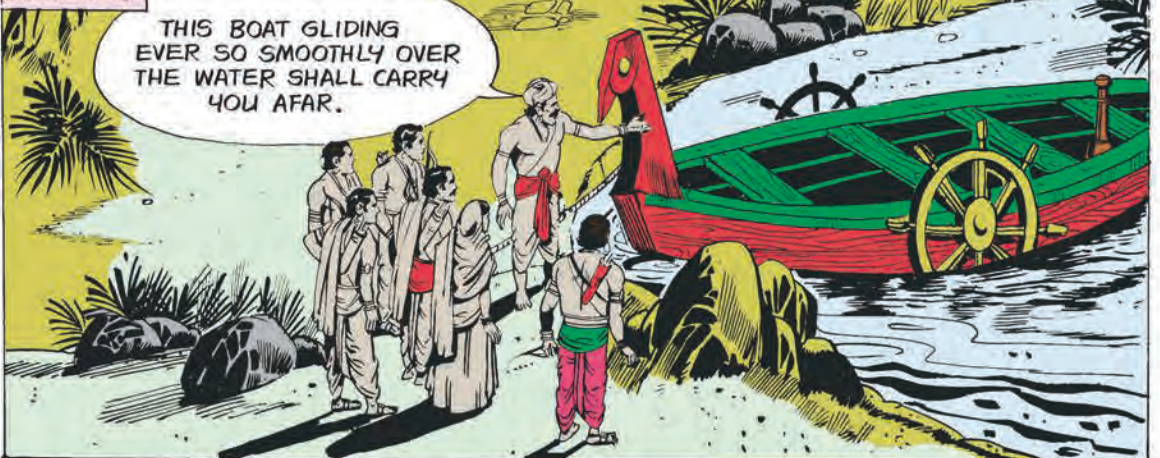
HE WILL SURVIVE WHO PRESERVES HIMSELF WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT FIRE WHICH BURNS UP FORESTS AND WARDS OFF WINTER WILL NOT SINGE THOSE IN FOREST HIDEOUTS.





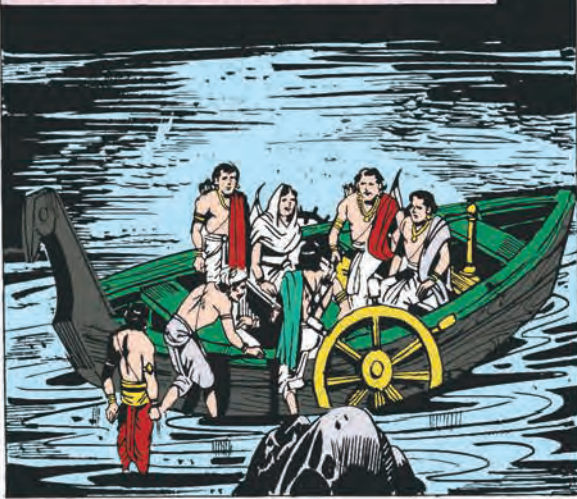


"HE THEN SHOWED THE PANDAVAS A BOAT WHICH COULD SPEED LIKE THOUGHT OR A HURRICANE BECAUSE IT WAS EQUIPPED WITH ENGINES TO COUNTER THE VAGARIES OF WEATHER.

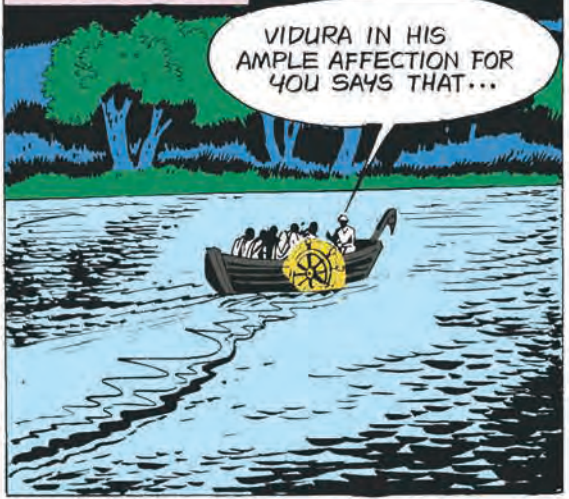




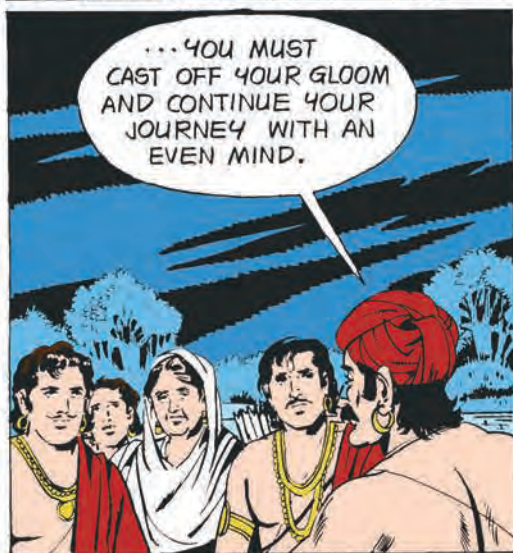
"HE THEN LED THE ANGUISHED PANDAVAS AND THEIR MOTHER INTO THE BOAT."



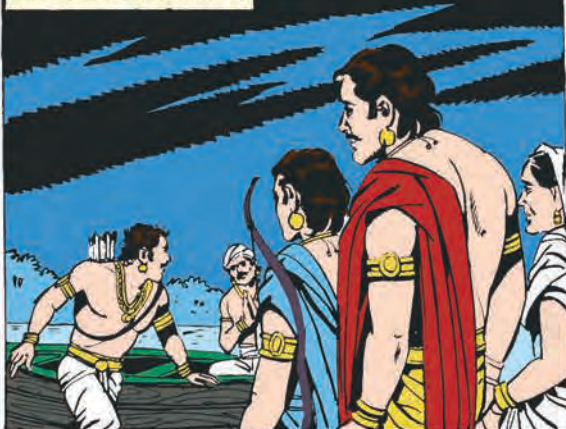
"AND AS HE FERRIED THEM ACROSS THE RIVER HE SAID:"



...YOU MUST CAST OFF YOUR GLOOM AND CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY WITH AN EVEN MIND.



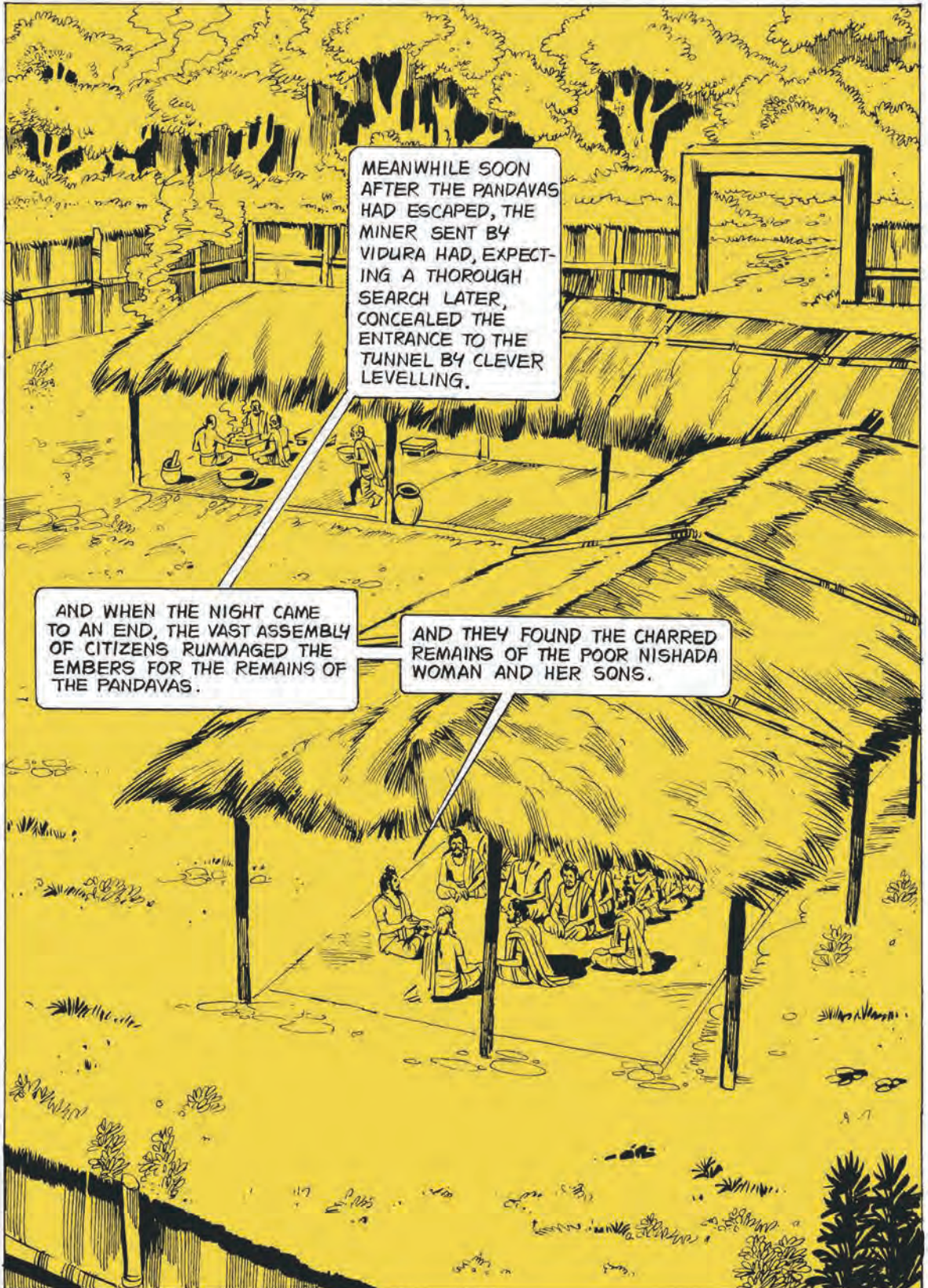
"AND WHEN THEY REACHED THE OPPOSITE BANK..."



"...HE RETURNED THE WAY HE HAD COME."





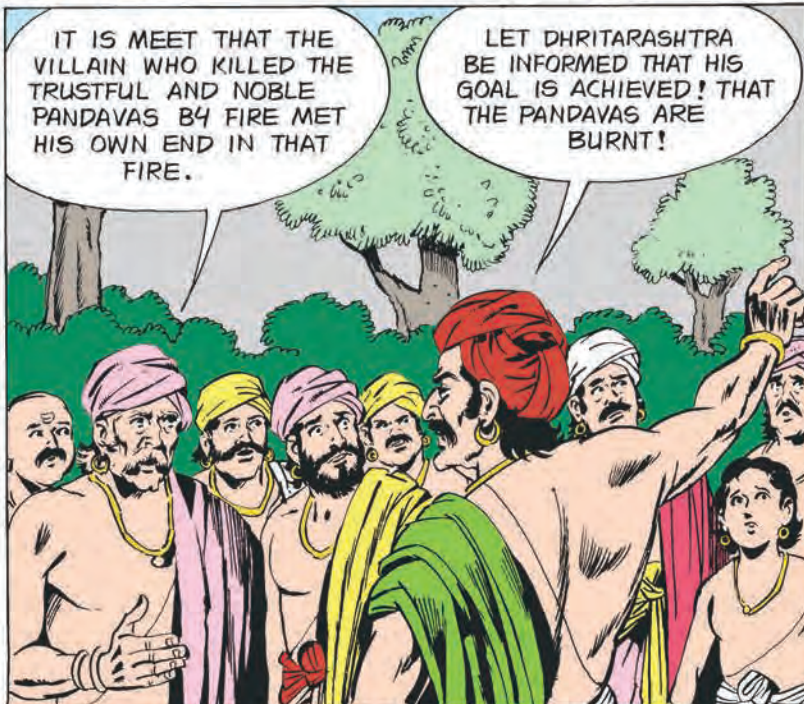


MEANWHILE SOON AFTER THE PANDAVAS HAD ESCAPED, THE MINER SENT BY VIDURA HAD, EXPECTING A THOROUGH SEARCH LATER, CONCEALED THE ENTRANCE TO THE TUNNEL BY CLEVER LEVELLING.

AND WHEN THE NIGHT CAME TO AN END, THE VAST ASSEMBLY OF CITIZENS RUMMAGED THE EMBERS FOR THE REMAINS OF THE PANDAVAS.

AND THEY FOUND THE CHARRED REMAINS OF THE POOR NISHADA WOMAN AND HER SONS.

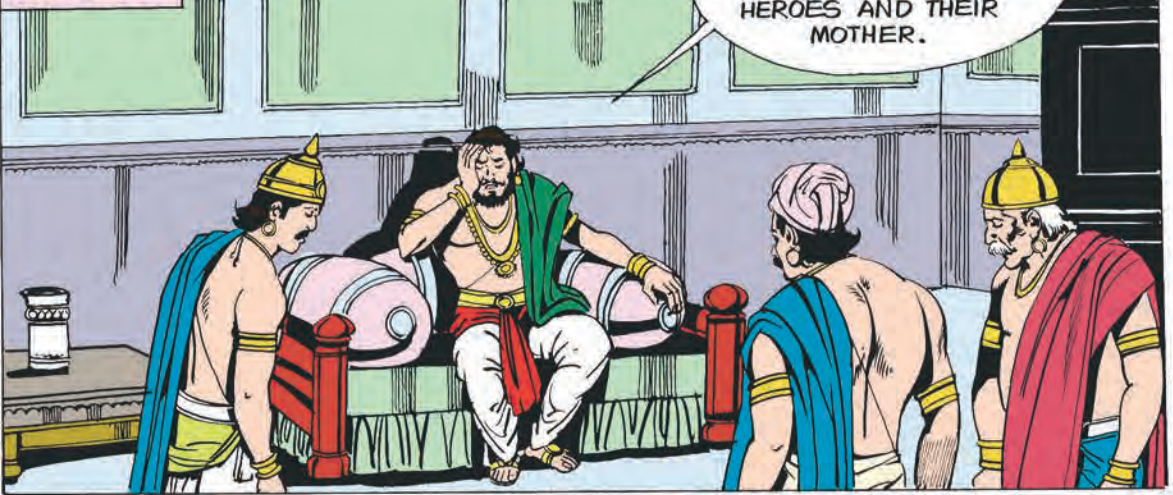






"WHEN DHRITARASHTRA HEARD OF THE DEATH OF THE PANDAVAS HE WAILED IN DEEP SORROW AND SAID:

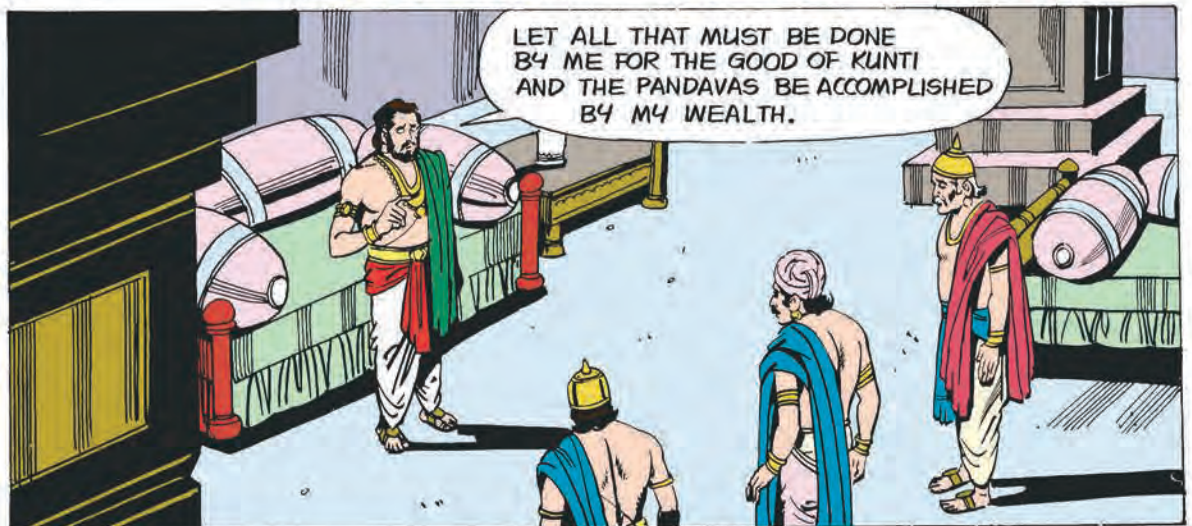
I SUFFER THE AGONY OF PANDU'S DEATH TODAY, IN THE DEATH OF THOSE HEROES AND THEIR MOTHER.



LET THEIR KINSMEN AND FRIENDS, AND MY MEN, GO WITHOUT DELAY TO VARANAVATA FOR THE FUNERAL RITES OF THE DAUGHTER OF KUNTIBHOJA AND THOSE VALIANT ONES.



LET ALL THAT MUST BE DONE BY ME FOR THE GOOD OF KUNTI AND THE PANDAVAS BE ACCOMPLISHED BY MY WEALTH.





"HAVING SAID THIS, DHRTARASHTRA ALONG WITH HIS KINSMEN MADE LIBATIONS OF WATER TO THE SONS OF PANDU.



"AND THEN ALL OF THEM CRIED OUT IN MOURNING:



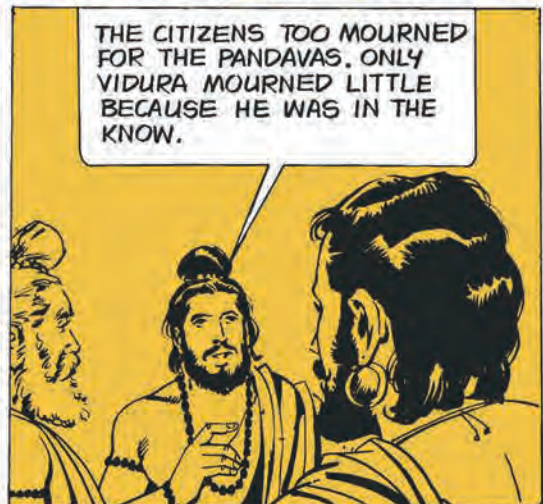
OH, YUDHISHTHIRA!  
OH, YUVARAJA OF  
THE KURU RACE!



OH, BHEEMA!  
OH, ARJUNA!



OH NAKULA!  
OH SAHADEVA!  
OH KUNTI!



THE CITIZENS TOO MOURNED  
FOR THE PANDAVAS. ONLY  
VIDURA MOURNED LITTLE  
BECAUSE HE WAS IN THE  
KNOW.



"MEANWHILE THE PANDAVAS, GUIDED BY THE STARS, HAD TAKEN THE PATH SOUTHWARD.



"AND, AFTER MUCH TRAVAIL, THEY REACHED A THICK FOREST.

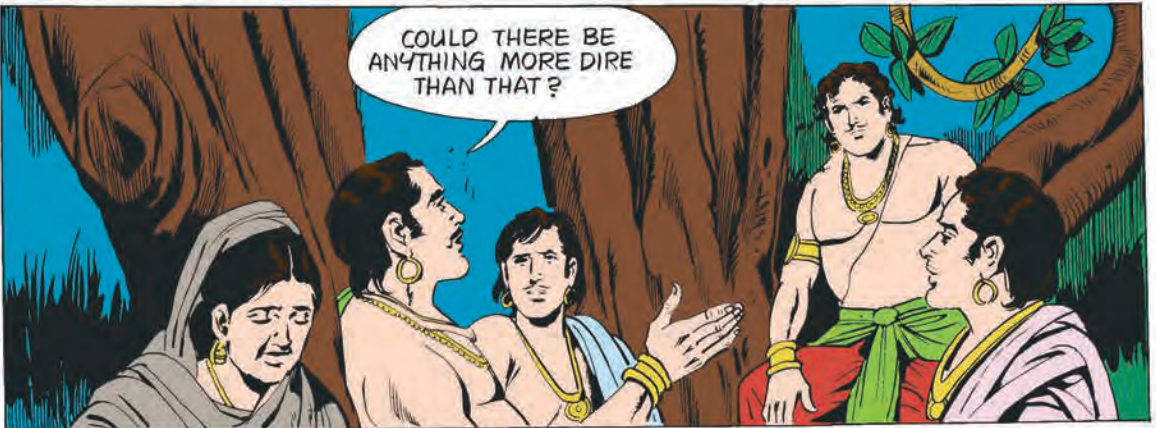


"THEY WERE TIRED AND THIRSTY AND NEAR-BLIND WITH SLEEP. THEN YUDHISHTHIRA SAID TO BHEEMA:

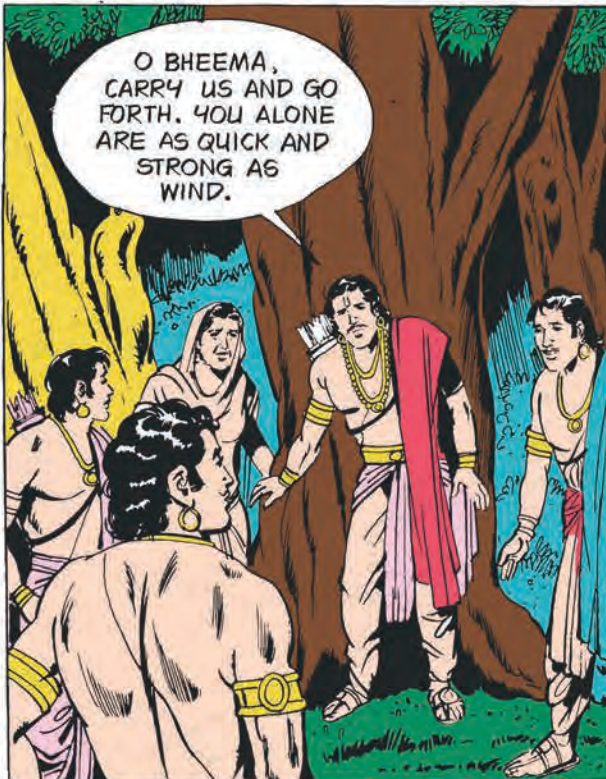
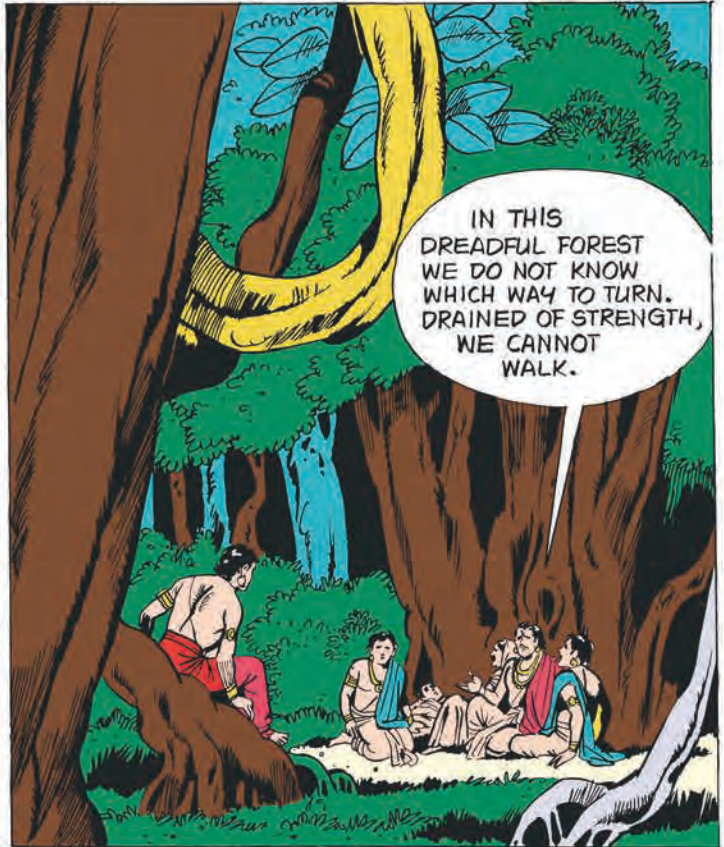
WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER PUROCHANA IS BURNT OUT OR NOT.



COULD THERE BE ANYTHING MORE DIRE THAN THAT?









"...WENT FORTH UNDAUNTED. AND AS HE SPED THROUGH THE FOREST, WITH THE FORCE OF VAYU HIMSELF, THE PANDAVAS ALMOST FAINTED.



" SPANNING WIDE TURBULENT STREAMS...



"...AND TRAVERSING CRAGGY TERRAIN...





TOWARDS EVENING  
HE REACHED A DESOLATE  
JUNGLE WHERE ROAMED  
PREDATORY BEASTS AND  
WHERE THERE WAS SCANT  
WATER OR FRUITS OR  
ROOTS.



"AS DARKNESS CREPT UPON THE TWILIGHT, THE  
HOWL OF ANIMALS TURNED MORE RAUCOUS; AND  
AN UNTIMELY WIND BEGAN TO BLOW WHICH,  
TEARING THROUGH THE JUNGLE, SCATTERED THE  
DRIED LEAVES EVEN AS IT GROUNDLED STURDY  
TREES.



"THE PANDAVAS, WEIGHED DOWN BY SLEEP, WERE  
UNABLE TO GO ON. THEY SAT DOWN THERE. THEN  
KUNTI, OPPRESSED BY THIRST, SAID TO HER SONS:

I AM THE MOTHER  
OF FIVE PANDAVAS.  
I AM IN THE MIDST  
OF THEM AND YET  
I AM RACKED BY  
THIRST.

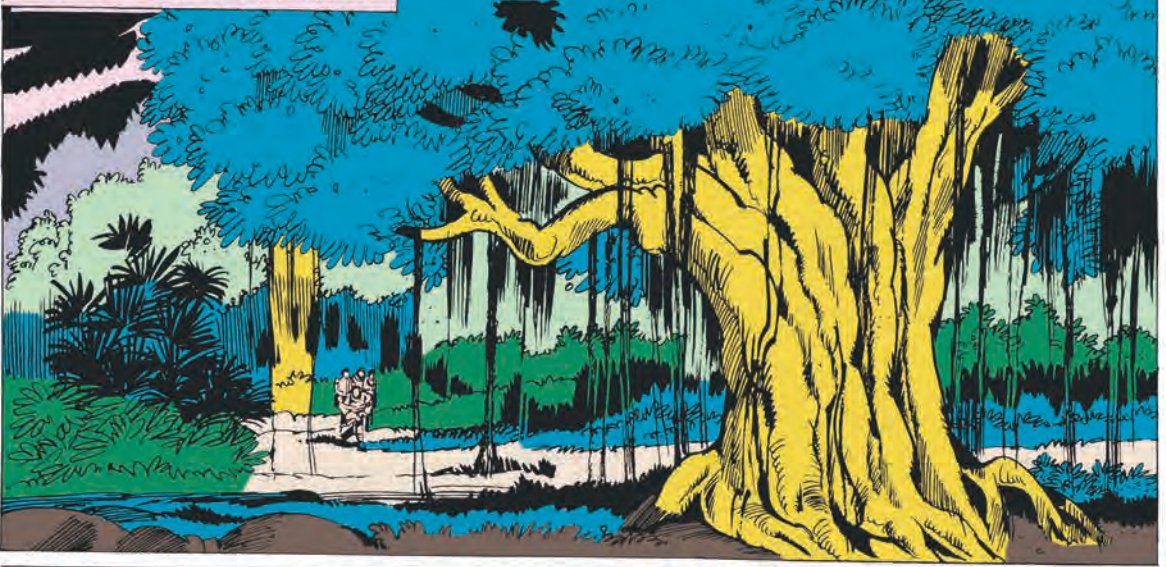


THESE WORDS OF HIS  
MOTHER, O MONARCH,  
SCORCHED THE HEART  
OF BHEEMA AND HE  
SET OUT.





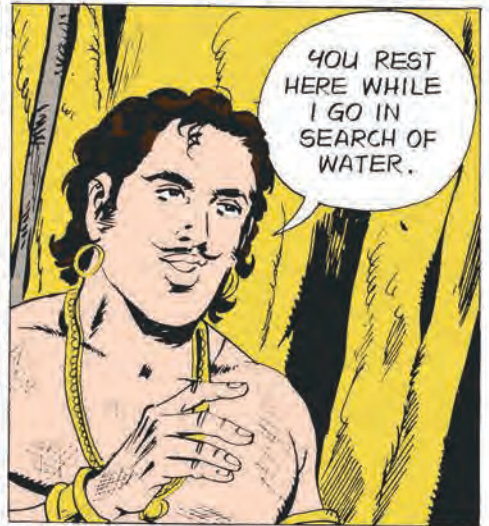
"AS HE WOUND HIS WAY THROUGH THE THICK, DESERTED JUNGLE, HE SAW A BEAUTIFUL, SPREADING BANYAN TREE.



"HE SET HIS MOTHER AND BROTHERS DOWN, AND SAID TO THEM:



I CAN HEAR THE CALL OF WATER-BIRDS. THERE MUST BE A POOL NEAR BY.



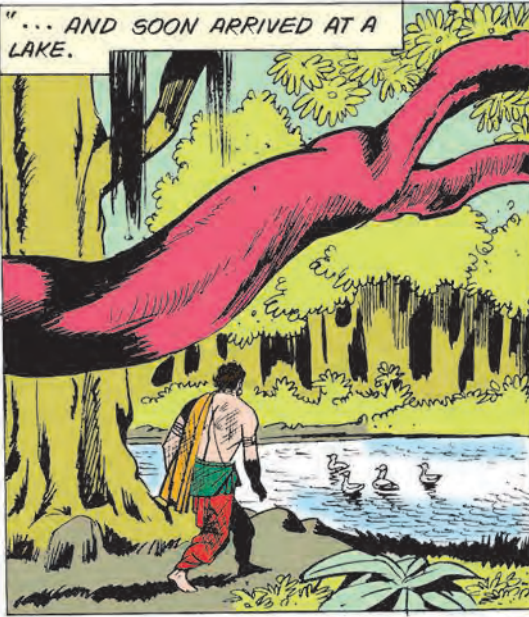
YOU REST HERE WHILE I GO IN SEARCH OF WATER.

"BHEEMA WENT IN THE DIRECTION OF THE CRIES OF THE WATER-BIRDS...





"... AND SOON ARRIVED AT A LAKE.



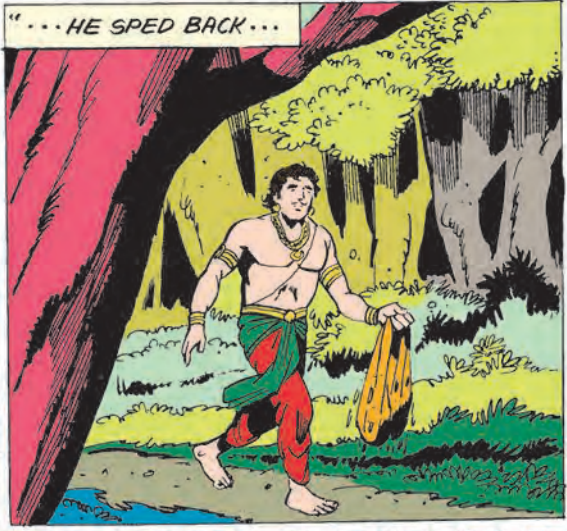
"... WHERE HE SLAKED HIS THIRST AND THEN BATHED.



" THEN SOAKING HIS UPPER CLOTH...



"... HE SPED BACK...



"... TO HIS MOTHER AND BROTHERS.





"FINDING THEM SLEEPING ON THE BARE EARTH, HE WAS OVERCOME BY GRIEF AND CRIED:

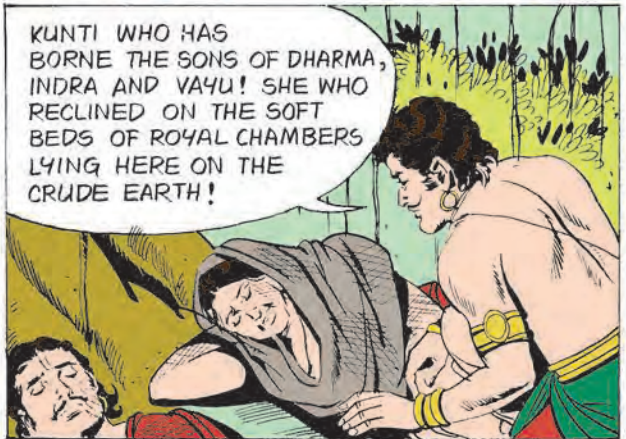
ACCURSED THAT I AM, I AM FORCED TO SEE THIS MOST PAINFUL SIGHT OF MY MOTHER SLEEPING ON THIS RUDE GROUND!



KUNTI. THE DAUGHTER OF KUNTIBHOJA, THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW OF VICHITRAVEERYA, THE WIFE OF KING PANDU TO SLEEP THUS ON BARE EARTH!



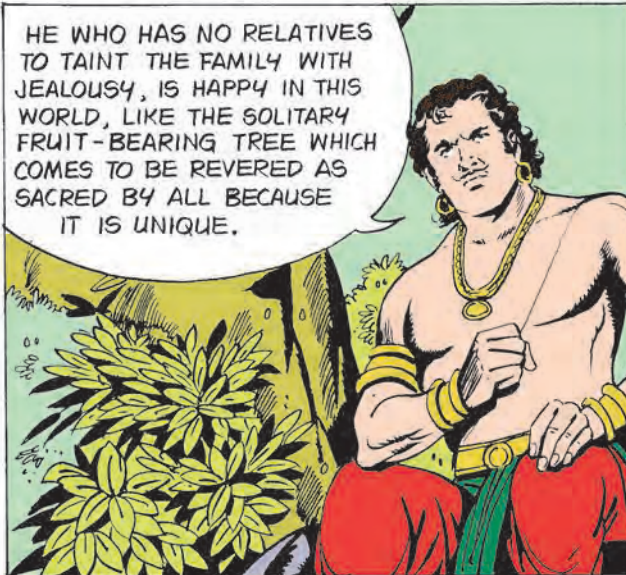
KUNTI WHO HAS BORNE THE SONS OF DHARMA, INDRA AND VAYU! SHE WHO RECLINED ON THE SOFT BEDS OF ROYAL CHAMBERS LYING HERE ON THE CRUDE EARTH!



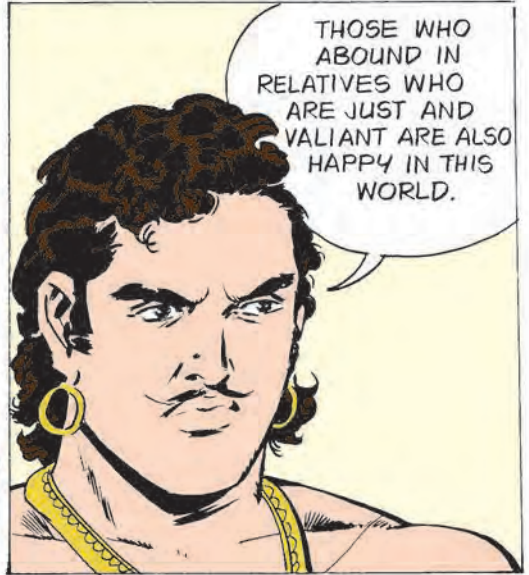
O WHAT CAN BE MORE DISTRESSING THAN TO WATCH THESE PRINCES AMONG MEN ASLEEP ON THE DUSTY EARTH.







HE WHO HAS NO RELATIVES TO TAINT THE FAMILY WITH JEALOUSY, IS HAPPY IN THIS WORLD, LIKE THE SOLITARY FRUIT-BEARING TREE WHICH COMES TO BE REVERED AS SACRED BY ALL BECAUSE IT IS UNIQUE.



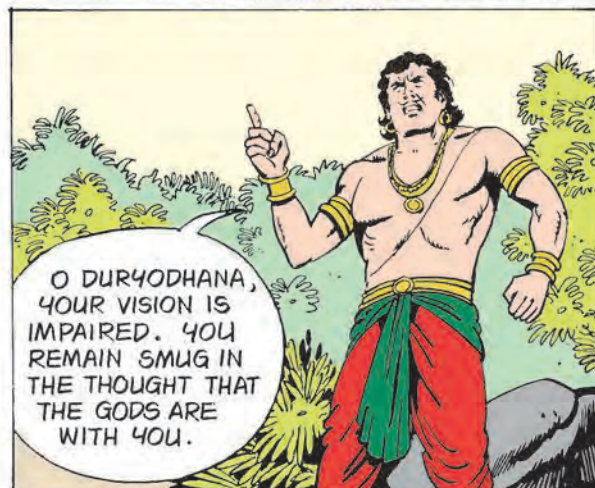
THOSE WHO ABOUND IN RELATIVES WHO ARE JUST AND VALIANT ARE ALSO HAPPY IN THIS WORLD.



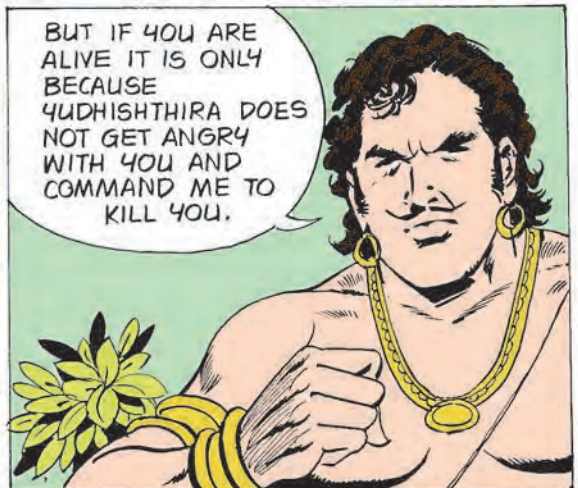
THOSE WHO ARE POWERFUL WITH AMPLE WEALTH, AND AN ABUNDANCE OF FRIENDS AND RELATIVES, STAND TALL LIKE THE TREES OF A FOREST.



AS FOR US, IT HAS BEEN EXILE AT THE HANDS OF WICKED DHRTARASHTRA AND HIS SONS; AND A FORTUITOUS ESCAPE FROM A FIERY DEATH.

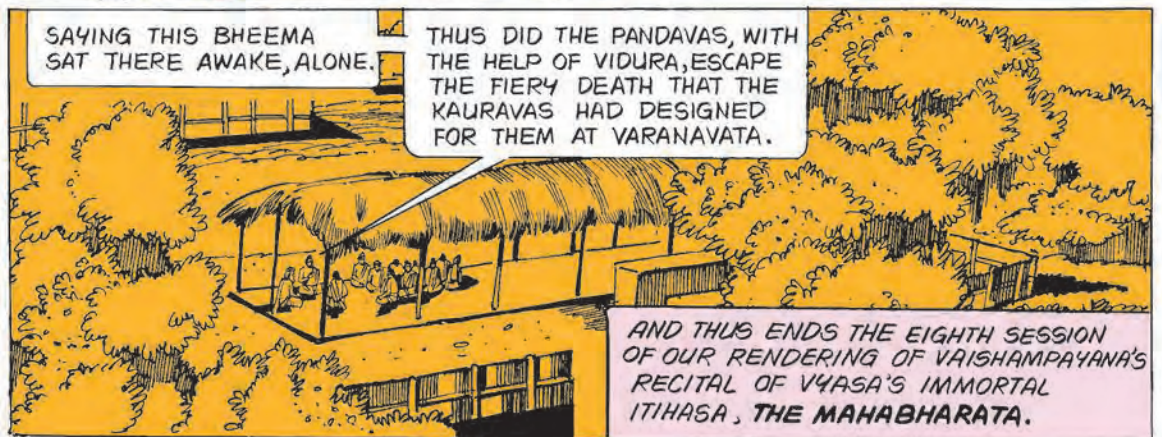
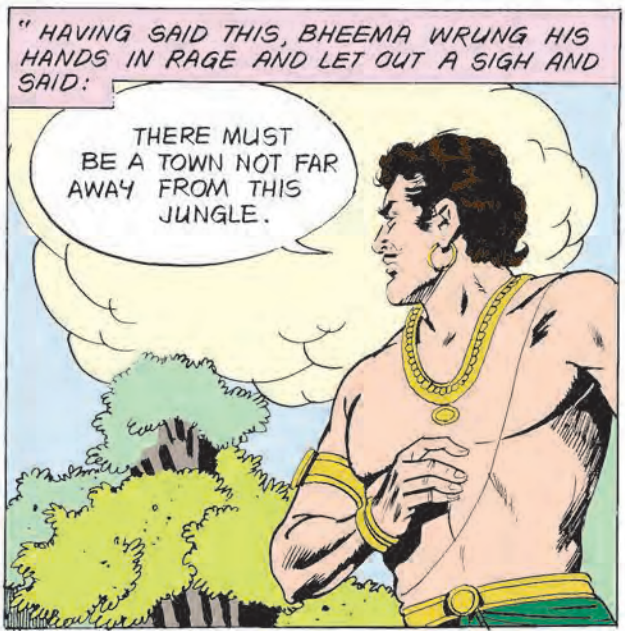


O DURYODHANA, YOUR VISION IS IMPAIRED. YOU REMAIN SMUG IN THE THOUGHT THAT THE GODS ARE WITH YOU.



BUT IF YOU ARE ALIVE IT IS ONLY BECAUSE YUDHISHTHIRA DOES NOT GET ANGRY WITH YOU AND COMMAND ME TO KILL YOU.







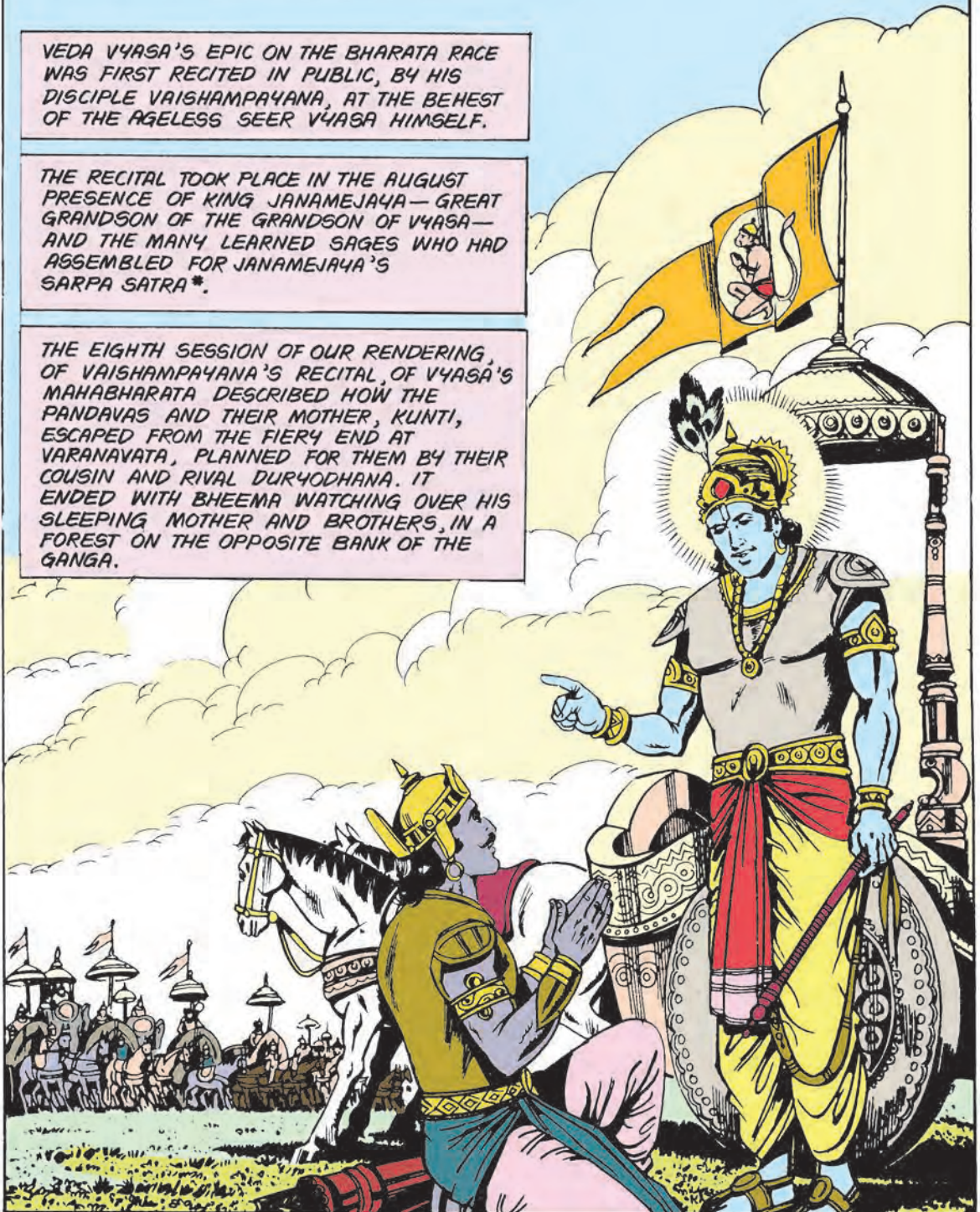
# Mahabharata-9

## The Birth of Ghatotkacha

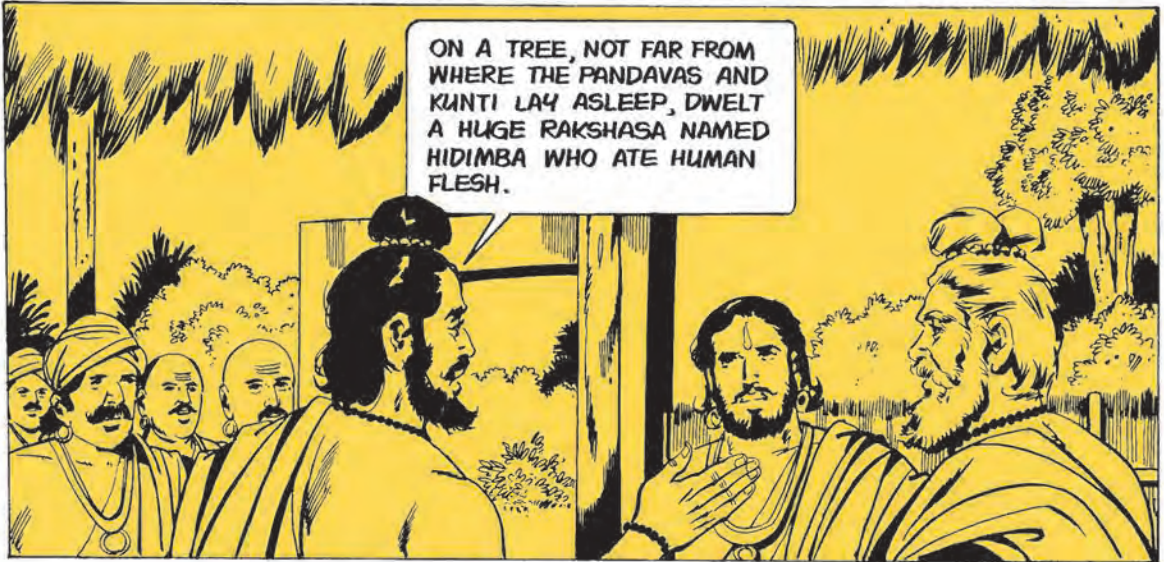
VEDA VYASA'S EPIC ON THE BHARATA RACE WAS FIRST RECITED IN PUBLIC, BY HIS DISCIPLE VAISHAMPAYANA, AT THE BEHEST OF THE AGELESS SEER VYASA HIMSELF.

THE RECITAL TOOK PLACE IN THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF KING JANAMEJAYA—GREAT GRANDSON OF THE GRANDSON OF VYASA—AND THE MANY LEARNED SAGES WHO HAD ASSEMBLED FOR JANAMEJAYA'S SARPA SATRA\*.

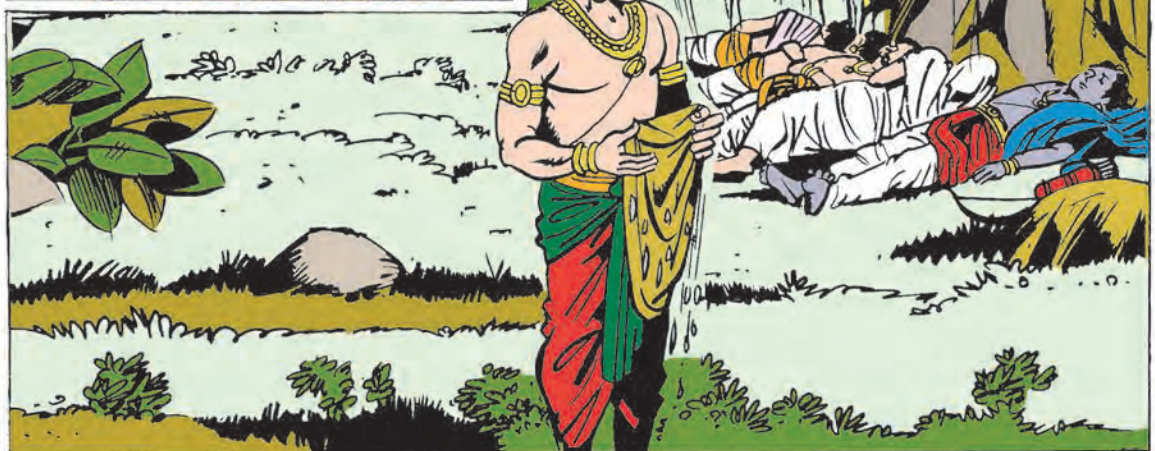
THE EIGHTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING, OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL, OF VYASA'S MAHABHARATA DESCRIBED HOW THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR MOTHER, KUNTI, ESCAPED FROM THE FIERY END AT VARANAVATA, PLANNED FOR THEM BY THEIR COUSIN AND RIVAL DURYODHANA. IT ENDED WITH BHEEMA WATCHING OVER HIS SLEEPING MOTHER AND BROTHERS, IN A FOREST ON THE OPPOSITE BANK OF THE GANGA.







"FAMISHED, HE WAS LONGING FOR FOOD WHEN HE SCENTED MAN. HE SHOOK HIMSELF UP, RAN HIS FINGERS THROUGH HIS DRY LOCKS AND LOOKED AROUND. AND HE BEHELD THE SONS OF PANDU ASLEEP ON THE GROUND.





"AND HE SAID TO HIS SISTER:

I HAVE  
CHANCED UPON  
MAN, MY FAVOURITE  
FOOD, AFTER A LONG  
TIME. IT MAKES MY  
MOUTH WATER.



WITH MY EIGHT, SHARP,  
POINTED TEETH, I SHALL DIG  
INTO THE SOFT HUMAN FLESH.  
SEIZING THE THROAT AND  
PIERCING THE VEINS, I SHALL  
HAVE MY FILL OF FRESH,  
FROTHY, HUMAN BLOOD.



GO, KILL  
THEM AND BRING  
THEM TO ME!  
FEAR NOT!



CARRY OUT MY  
ORDERS AND LET US  
FEAST ON THOSE  
SLEEPING TRESPASSERS.  
AND AFTER THE RICH  
REPAST WE SHALL  
DANCE TO DIVERSE  
BEATS.





"AT THE BIDDING OF HER BROTHER, THE RAKSHASI HIDIMBAA WENT, O MONARCH...



"...AND SHE BEHELD THE SLEEPING SONS OF PANDU AND THEIR MOTHER, GUARDED BY THE INVINCIBLE BHEEMA.



"AND BEHOLDING BHEEMA, THE RAKSHASI FELL IN LOVE WITH HIM. AND SHE SAID TO HERSELF:

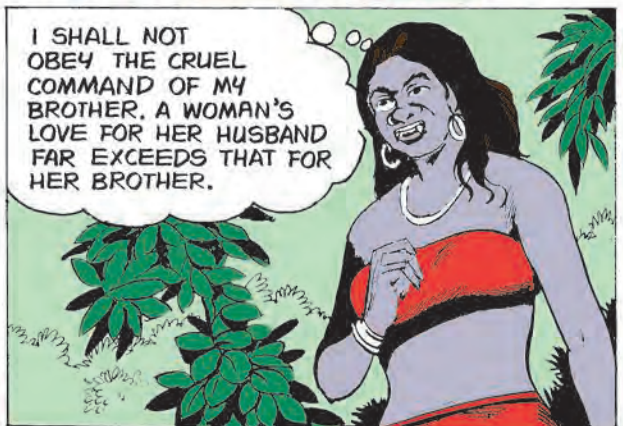
THIS PERSON OF MIGHTY ARMS AND RADIANT HUE, OF LEONINE SHOULDERS AND SHAPELY NECK, IS FIT TO BE MY HUSBAND.



ONCE SLAIN, HE WILL YIELD SOME MOMENTARY PLEASURE. IF HE LIVES, ENDURING PLEASURES WILL BE MINE.



I SHALL NOT OBEY THE CRUEL COMMAND OF MY BROTHER. A WOMAN'S LOVE FOR HER HUSBAND FAR EXCEEDS THAT FOR HER BROTHER.





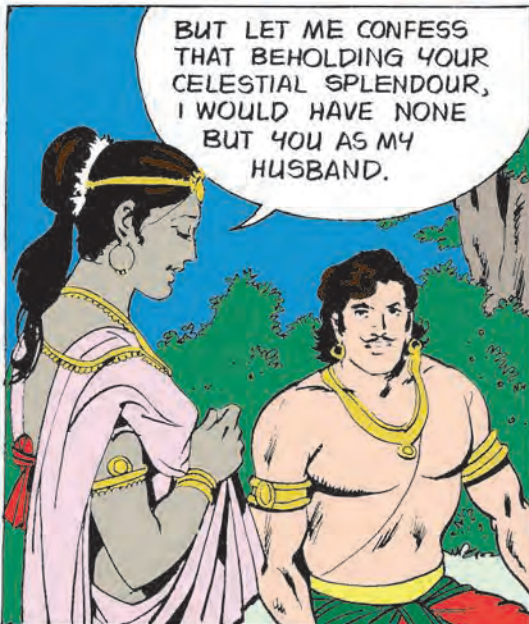


“...ADVANCING TOWARDS BHEEMA  
ASKED HIM WITH A SMILING FACE:

O MIGHTY ONE,  
WHO ARE YOU? FROM  
WHERE HAVE YOU COME  
TO THIS FOREST WHICH  
IS THE REALM OF THE  
RAKSHASA HIDIMBA?  
HE, MY BROTHER, HAS  
SENT ME HERE WITH  
THE EVIL INTENT OF  
EATING YOU FOR  
HIS MEAL.



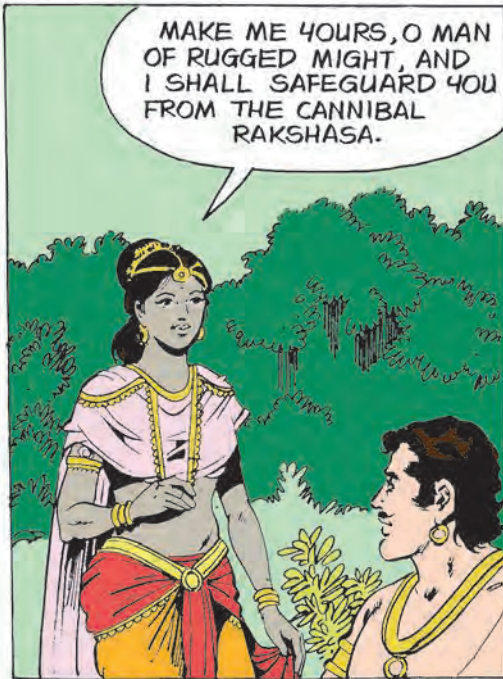
BUT LET ME CONFESS  
THAT BEHOLDING YOUR  
CELESTIAL SPLENDOR,  
I WOULD HAVE NONE  
BUT YOU AS MY  
HUSBAND.



I AM SMITTEN BY  
THE SHAFTS OF  
KAMADEVA\*.  
NOW THAT YOU KNOW  
IT, DO WHAT IS  
PROPER.







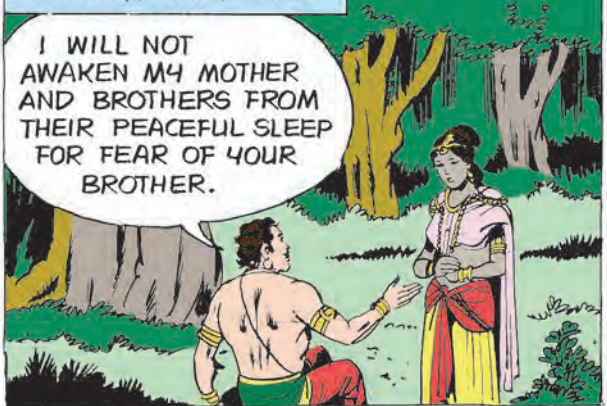
"LISTENING TO THESE WORDS, BHEEMA SAID:



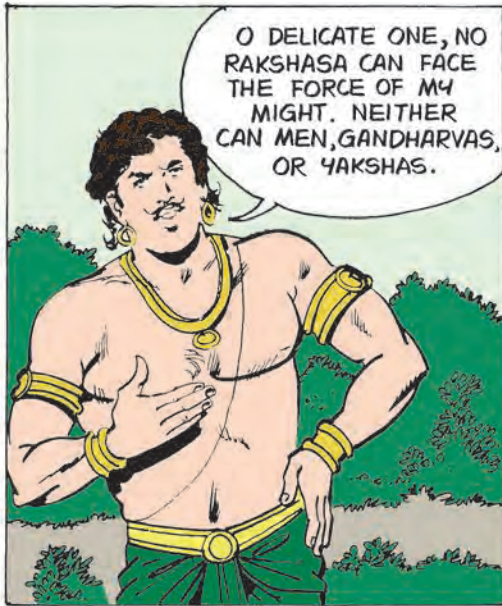
"HIDIMBA REPLIED:



"BHEEMA THEN SAID:







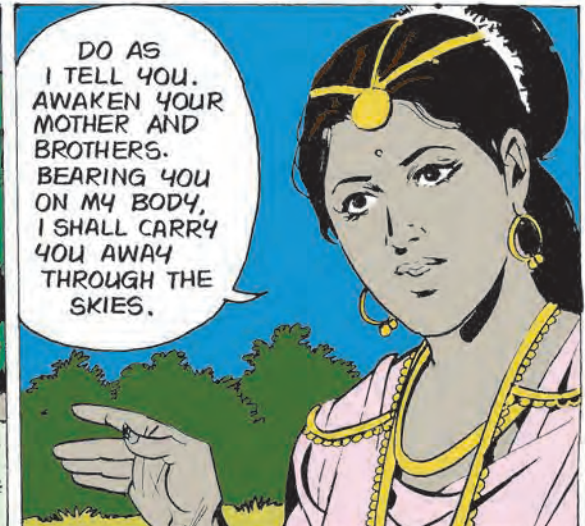
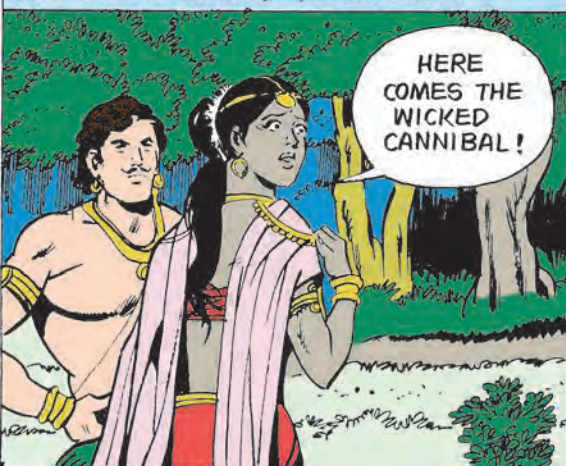
"MEANWHILE, NOTING THAT HIS SISTER HAD NOT YET RETURNED, HIDIMBA ALIGHTED FROM THE TREE..."



"... AND PROCEEDED TO THE SPOT WHERE THE PANDAVAS WERE."

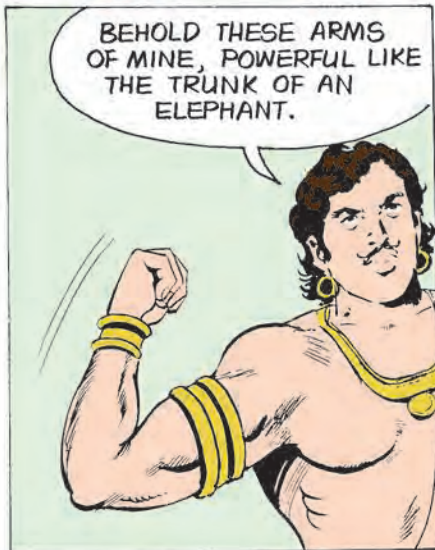


"HIDIMBA SAW THE BROTHER APPROACHING AND IN ALARM SAID TO BHEEMA:

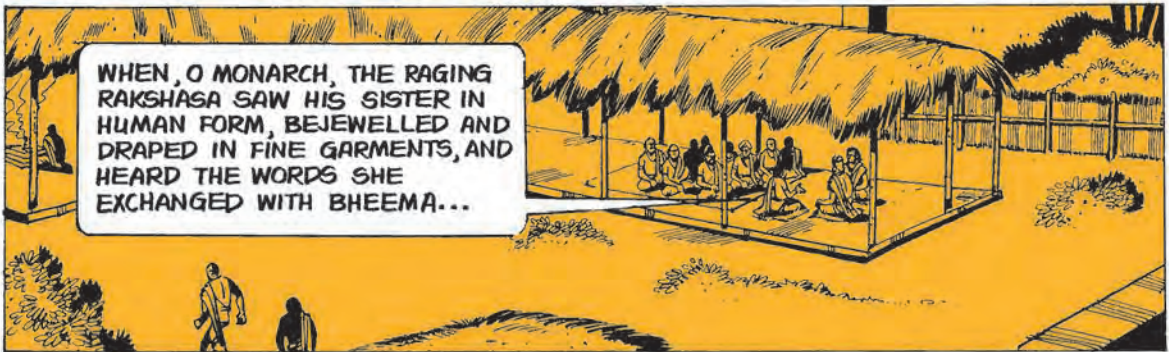




"BHEEMA THEN SAID :









"AND HIDIMBA OF BLOOD-SHOT EYES, GNASHED HIS TEETH AND RAN TOWARDS HER TO KILL HER. AND BHEEMA, BEHOLDING THE CHARGING RAKSHASA, CRIED:

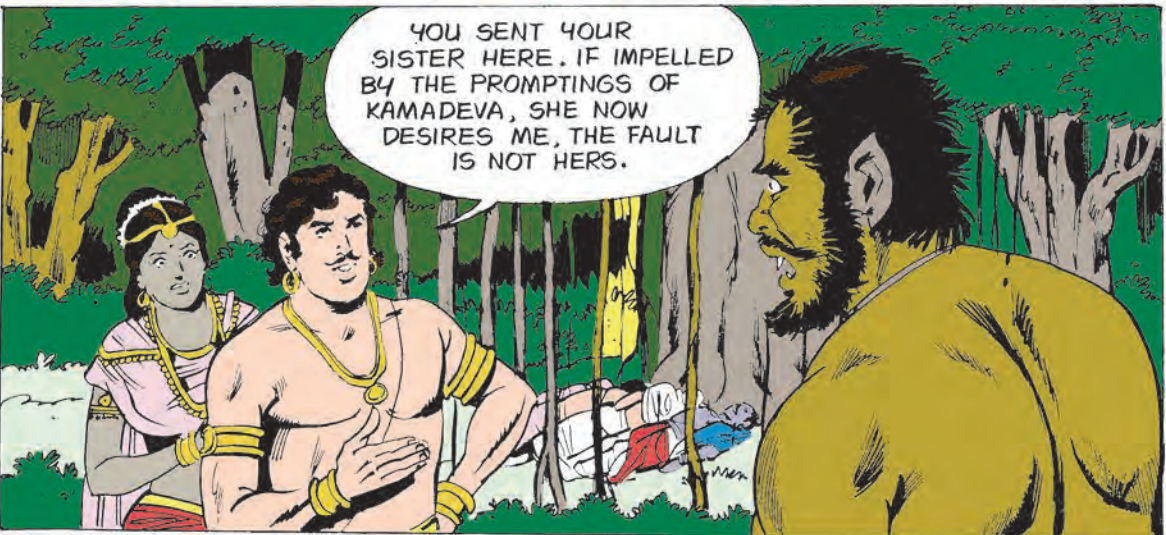
STOP, YOU WICKED WRETCH! YOU SHALL NOT HARM A WOMAN IN MY PRESENCE.



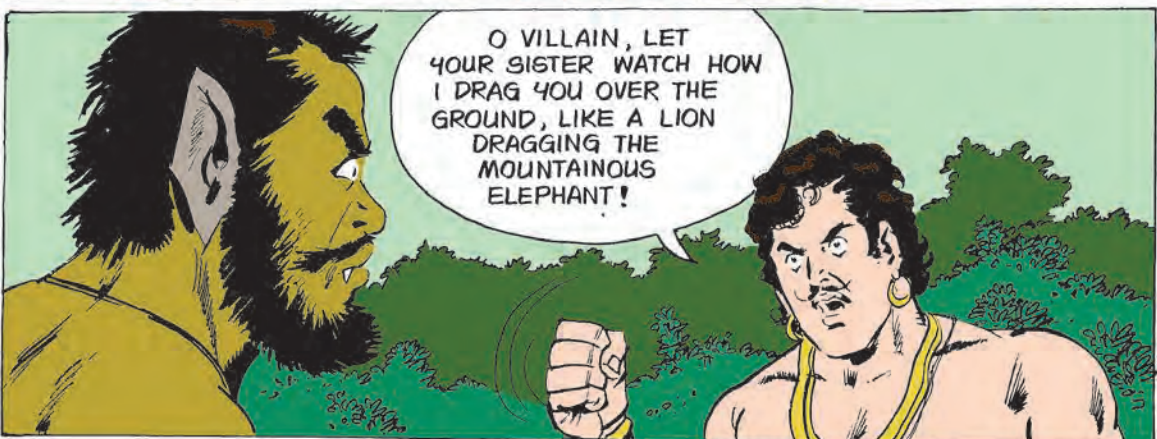
COME AND FIGHT WITH ME. DO NOT SLAY THE WOMAN, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE CULPRIT IS SOMEONE ELSE.



YOU SENT YOUR SISTER HERE. IF IMPELLED BY THE PROMPTINGS OF KAMADEVA, SHE NOW DESIRES ME, THE FAULT IS NOT HERS.









"HEARING THESE WORDS, HIDIMBA SAID:

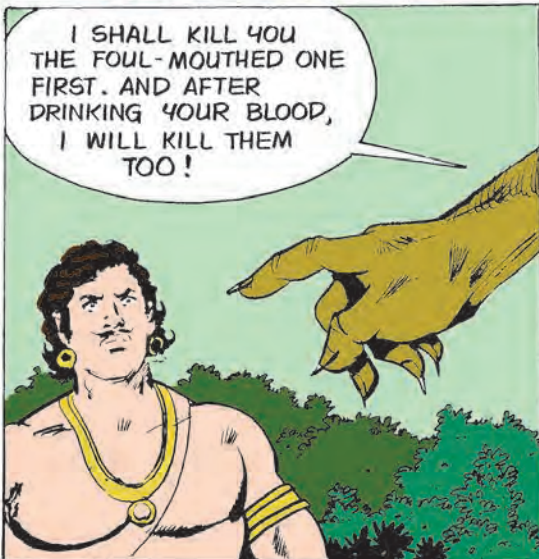
ALL THIS BLUSTER AND BOASTING IS OF NO USE. PROVE IT IN ACTION, AND WITHOUT ANY DELAY. YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF TO BE STRONG AND BRAVE. YOU SHALL LEARN THE TRUTH IN COMBAT WITH ME.



TILL THEN I WILL NOT KILL THE OTHERS. I SHALL LET THEM SLEEP IN PEACE.



I SHALL KILL YOU THE FOUL-MOUTHED ONE FIRST. AND AFTER DRINKING YOUR BLOOD, I WILL KILL THEM TOO!



AND THEN, LAST OF ALL, THIS SISTER OF MINE WHO HAS GONE AGAINST ME.





"AND THE RAKSHASA, RAISING HIS ARMS IN WRATH, RUSHED FORTH TOWARDS BHEEMA.



"BHEEMA LAUGHINGLY CAUGHT HOLD OF HIS OUTSTRETCHED HANDS..."



"...AND DRAGGED THE DESPERATELY STRUGGLING RAKSHASA A FULL THIRTY-TWO CUBITS, LIKE A LION DRAGGING SOME SMALL ANIMAL.



"SEIZED THUS BY BHEEMA, THE RAKSHASA TURNED FURIOUS AND HE LET OUT A FEARSOME YELL.

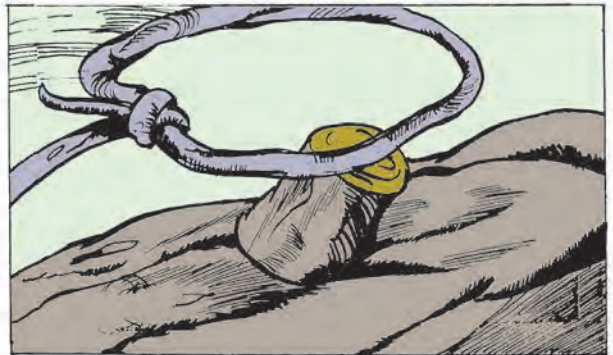
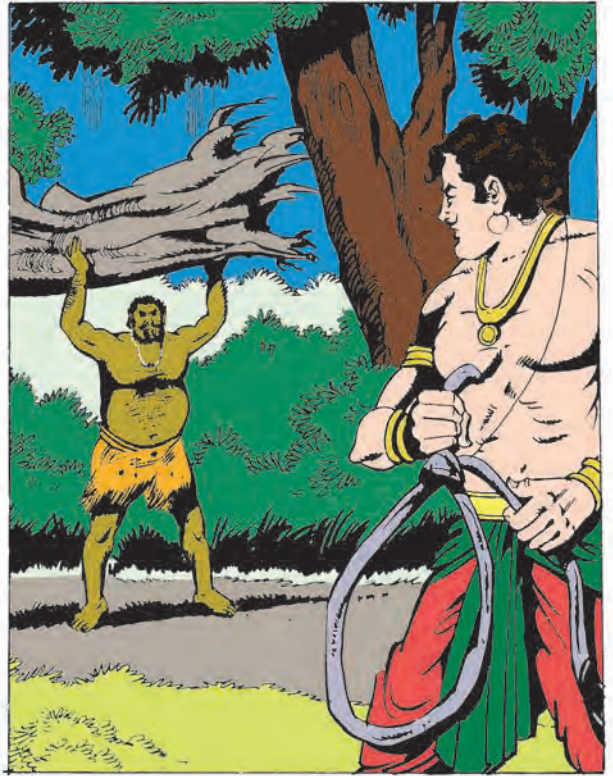


THE MIGHTY BHEEMA THEN DRAGGED THE RAKSHASA FARTHER AWAY, O MONARCH, LEST HIS YELLS SHOULD DISTURB THE SLEEP OF HIS BROTHERS.





"THEY THEN BEGAN UPROOTING THE TREES AND TEARING APART THE MAZE OF CREEPERS."





"LIKE TWO FULL-GROWN, FURIOUS ELEPHANTS ...



"... BHEEMA AND HIDIMBA GRAPPLED AND STRUGGLED.



"THE SOUNDS WOKE UP THE SLEEPING PANDAVAS AND THEIR MOTHER, AND THEY SAW HIDIMBAA STANDING BEFORE THEM. WONDERING AT THE BEAUTY OF THE GIRL, KUNTI ASKED HER:

WHO ARE YOU?  
ARE YOU A FOREST-SPRITE? ARE  
YOU AN APSARA? O FAIR ONE,  
FROM WHERE ARE YOU COME?  
WHAT IS THE ERRAND THAT  
BRINGS YOU HERE?





"HIDIMBAA ANSWERED HER QUESTIONS AND THEN SAID:

... BUT WHEN I SAW  
YOUR MIGHTY SON, INDUCED  
BY LORD MANMATHA\*WHO  
HOLDS THE HEARTSTRINGS  
OF ALL THINGS CREATED,  
I CAME UNDER HIS SPELL  
AND CHOSE HIM AS  
MY HUSBAND.

AND THE RAKSHASA, IRKED  
BY MY DELAY CAME HERE  
TO KILL ALL YOUR SONS. THEN  
YOUR MIGHTY SON  
DRAGGED HIM AWAY  
FROM HERE.

BEHOLD THEM,  
THE ROARING RIVALS,  
THE MAN AND THE  
RAKSHASA, MATCHING  
THEIR MIGHT IN  
COMBAT.



" HEARING THESE WORDS, YUDHISHTHIRA, ARJUNA, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA ROSE AT ONCE AND BEHELD THE COMBATANTS EAGER TO OVERPOWER EACH OTHER.



" THE DUST THEY RAISED SPREAD UP LIKE THE SMOKE OF A FOREST FIRE. THEIR BODIES COVERED WITH DUST STOOD OUT LIKE MOUNTAINS WITH A MANTLE OF MIST.



" THEN ARJUNA, PERCEIVING BHEEMA TO BE UNDER STRAIN, SAID WITH A QUIET SMILE:

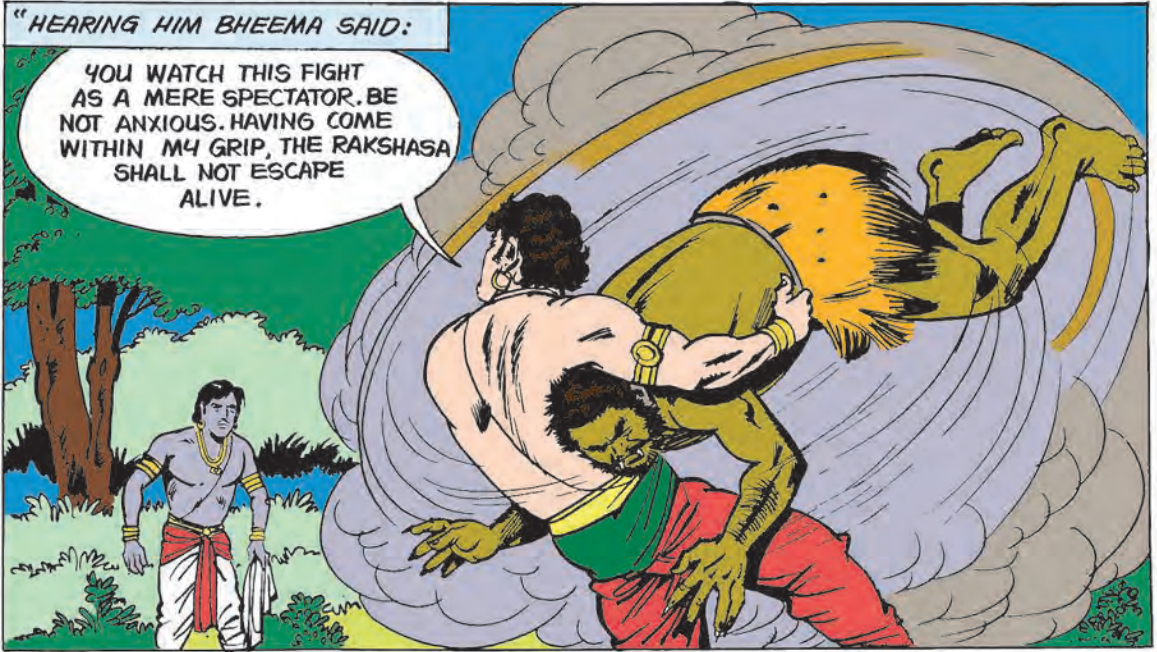
BE NOT AFRAID, BHEEMA, WE DID NOT KNOW OF YOUR STRENUOUS DUEL. I AM HERE TO HELP YOU. I SHALL FELL THIS RAKSHASA. NAKULA AND SAHADEVA WILL GUARD OUR MOTHER.





"HEARING HIM BHEEMA SAID:

YOU WATCH THIS FIGHT AS A MERE SPECTATOR. BE NOT ANXIOUS. HAVING COME WITHIN MY GRIP, THE RAKSHASA SHALL NOT ESCAPE ALIVE.

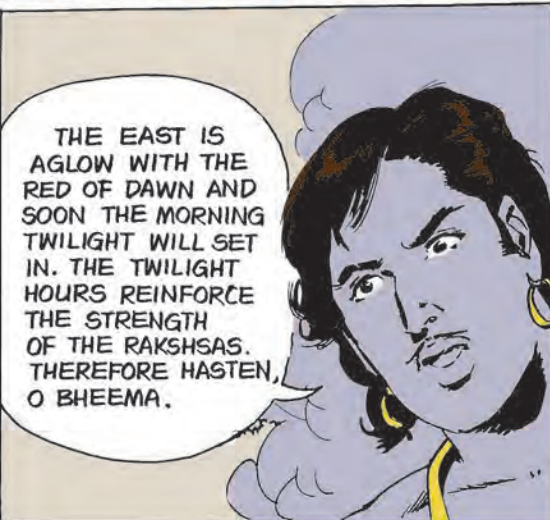


"THEN ARJUNA SAID:

WHY ARE YOU EXTENDING HIS LIFE? ENOUGH OF SPARRING WITH HIM. WE HAVE TO GO FARTHER AND CANNOT STAY ON HERE. SLAY HIM WITHOUT DELAY.



THE EAST IS AGLOW WITH THE RED OF DAWN AND SOON THE MORNING TWILIGHT WILL SET IN. THE TWILIGHT HOURS REINFORCE THE STRENGTH OF THE RAKSHSAS. THEREFORE HASTEN, O BHEEMA.

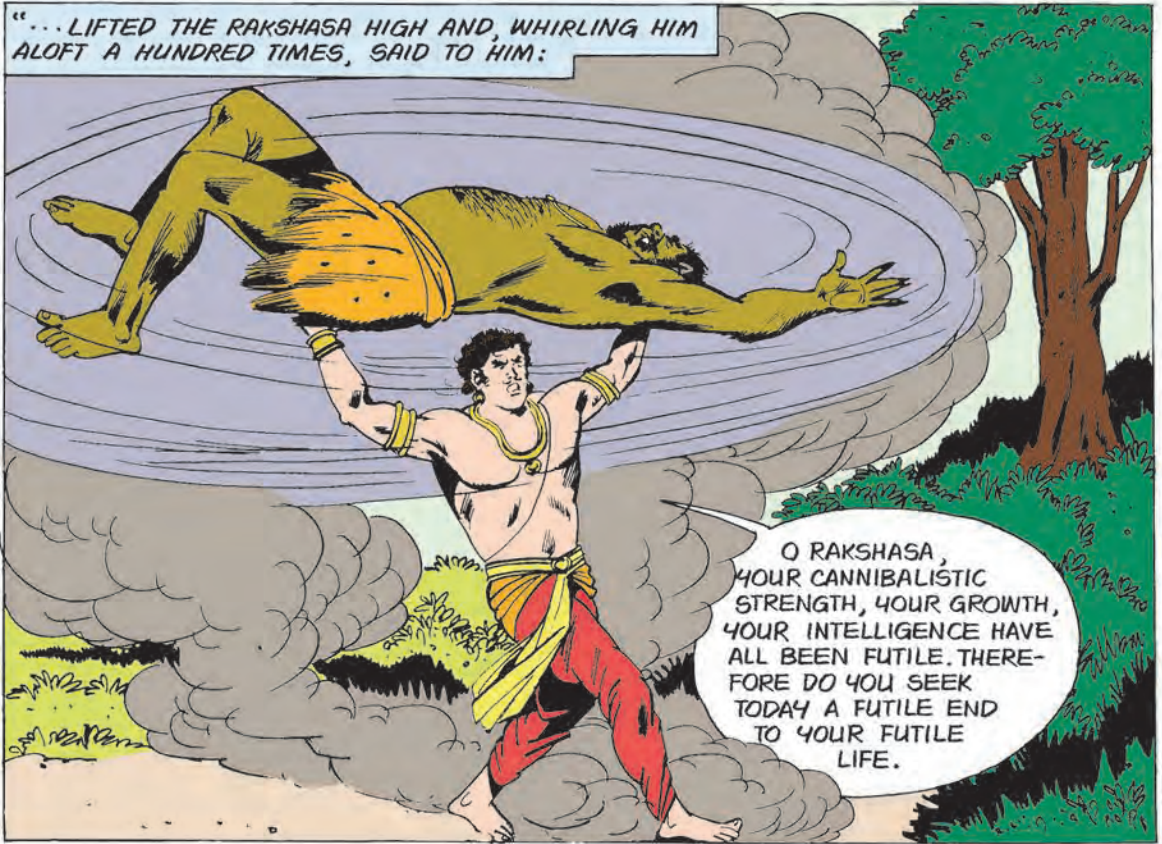


"THEN, INFLAMED WITH RAGE, BHEEMA SUMMONED ALL HIS LATENT MIGHT, WHICH RESEMBLED THE MIGHT VAYU, HIS FATHER, RELEASES DURING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSE..."



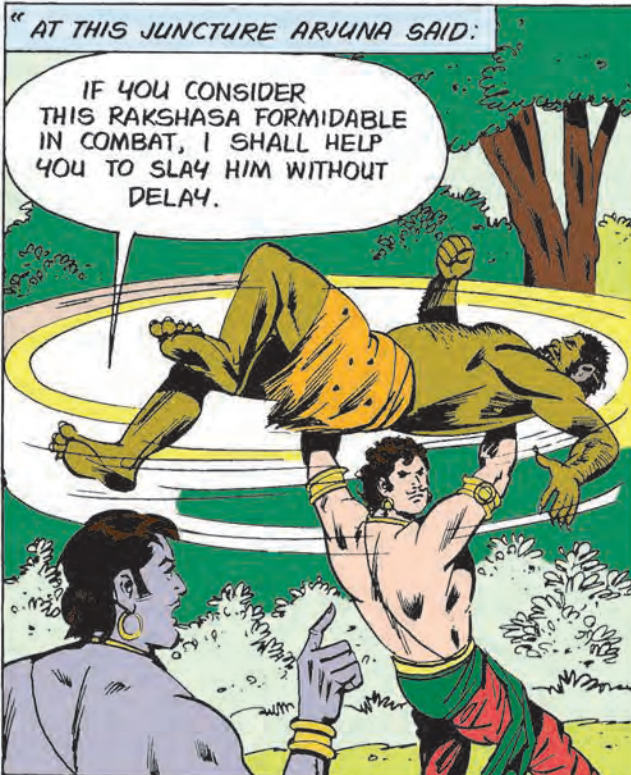


"...LIFTED THE RAKSHASA HIGH AND, WHIRLING HIM ALOFT A HUNDRED TIMES, SAID TO HIM:



" AT THIS JUNCTURE ARJUNA SAID:

IF YOU CONSIDER THIS RAKSHASA FORMIDABLE IN COMBAT, I SHALL HELP YOU TO SLAY HIM WITHOUT DELAY.



OTHERWISE I SHALL SLAY HIM MYSELF. YOU ARE EXHAUSTED BY THE TASK AND NEED TO REST FOR A WHILE.





"INFURIATED BY THESE WORDS, BHEEMA HURLED THE RAKSHASA..."



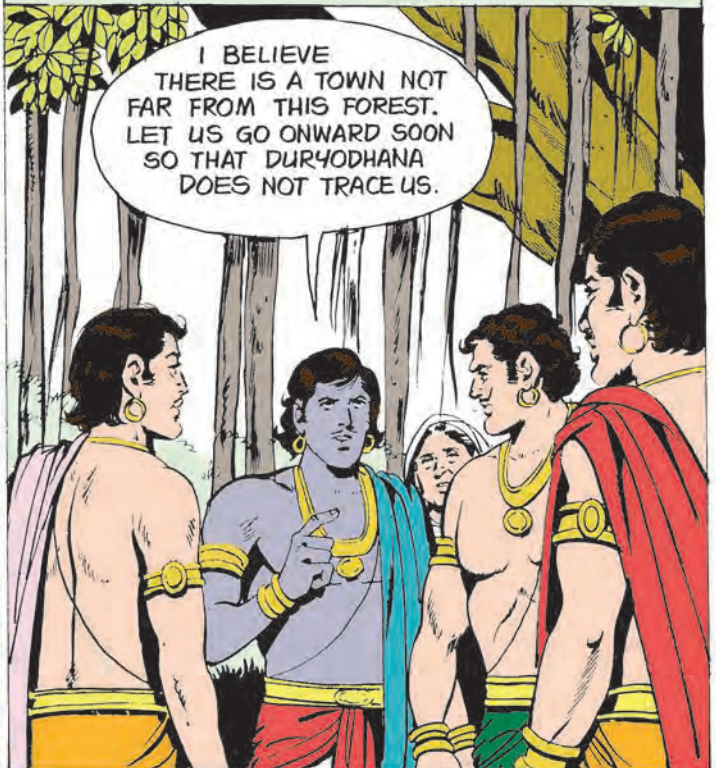
"... TO HIS DEATH. AND THE MORTAL ROAR OF THE DYING RAKSHASA FILLED THE WIDE FOREST."



O MONARCH, THEN, WITH HIS BARE HANDS, THE MIGHTY BHEEMA BENT THE BODY OF THE RAKSHASA AND BROKE IT BY THE MIDDLE. THE FEAT PLEASED THE BROTHERS. AND THOSE BRAVE MEN CONGRATULATED THE VALOROUS CONQUEROR.



"THEN ARIJUNA, WHO WAS ALL REVERENCE FOR HIS BROTHER OF RUGGED MIGHT, SAID:



I BELIEVE THERE IS A TOWN NOT FAR FROM THIS FOREST. LET US GO ONWARD SOON SO THAT DURYODHANA DOES NOT TRACE US.



"AS ALL THOSE VALIANT MEN  
PROCEEDED WITH THEIR MOTHER,  
HIDIMBAA FOLLOWED THEM.



"SEEING THIS, BHEEMA SAID:

RAKSHASAS ARE  
VINDICTIVE AND USE  
SORCERY TO  
WREAK VENGEANCE.

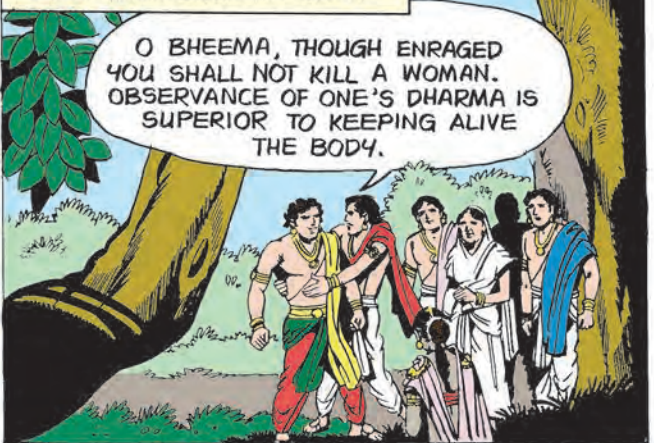


THEREFORE O HIDIMBAA,  
YOU SHALL FOLLOW THE  
PATH OF YOUR BROTHER.

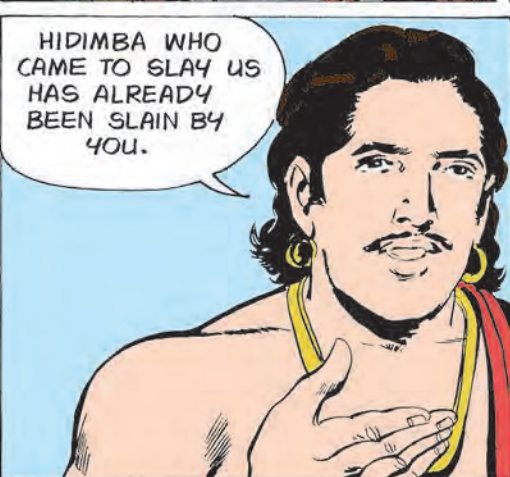


"THEN YUDHISHTHIRA SAID:

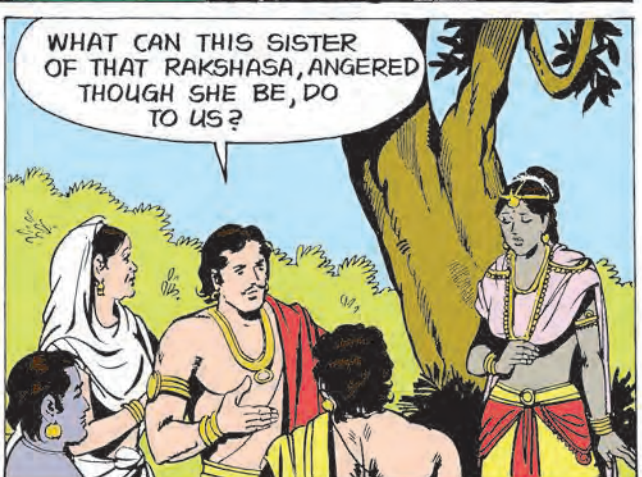
O BHEEMA, THOUGH ENRAGED  
YOU SHALL NOT KILL A WOMAN.  
OBSERVANCE OF ONE'S DHARMA IS  
SUPERIOR TO KEEPING ALIVE  
THE BODY.



HIDIMBA WHO  
CAME TO SLAY US  
HAS ALREADY  
BEEN SLAIN BY  
YOU.



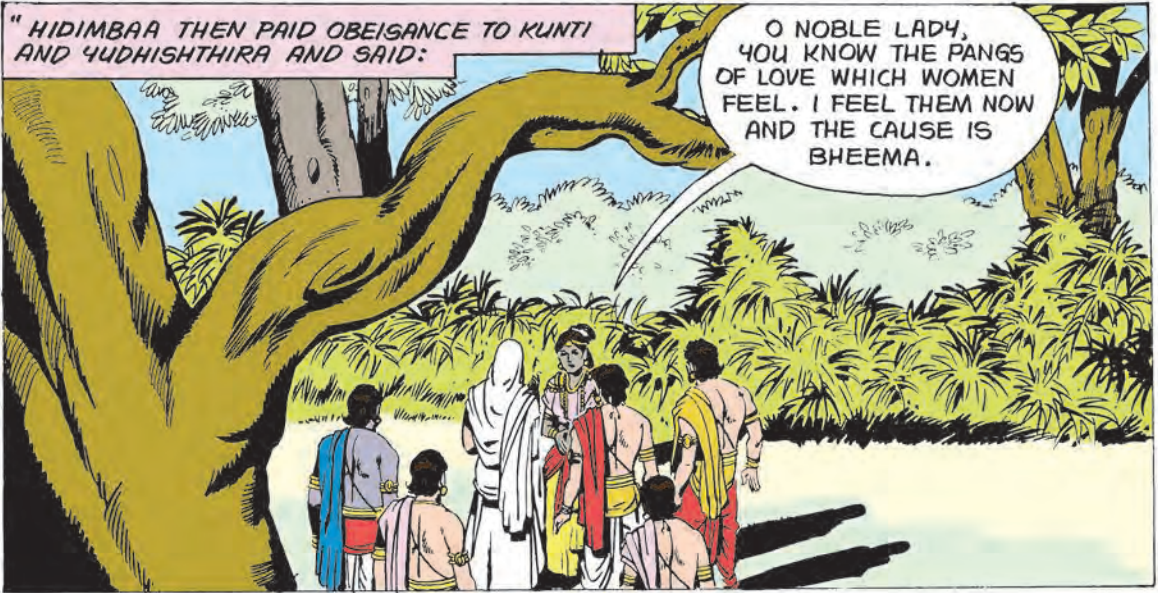
WHAT CAN THIS SISTER  
OF THAT RAKSHASA, ANGERED  
THOUGH SHE BE, DO  
TO US?



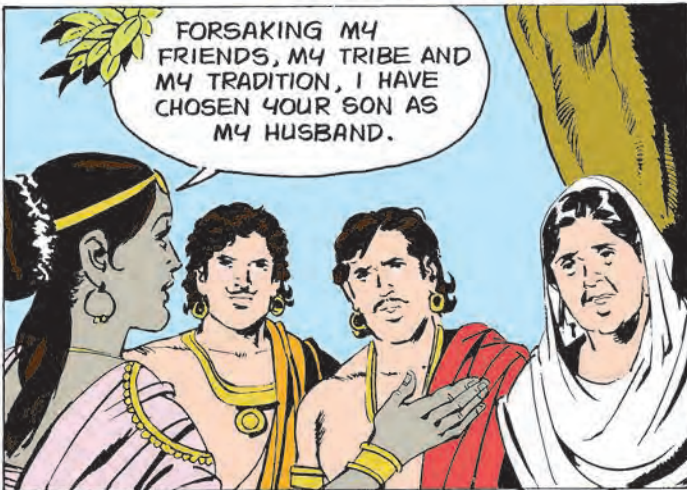


"HIDIMBAA THEN PAID OBEISANCE TO KUNTI AND YUDHISHTHIRA AND SAID:

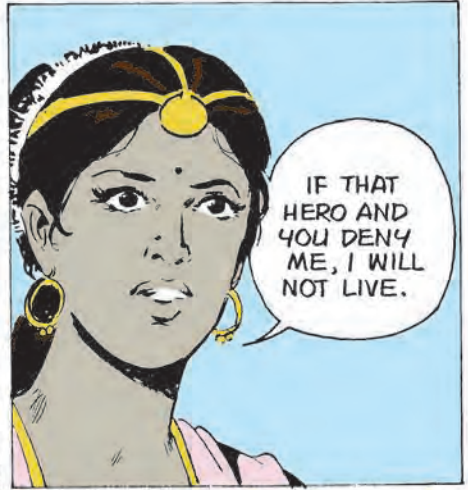
O NOBLE LADY, YOU KNOW THE PANGS OF LOVE WHICH WOMEN FEEL. I FEEL THEM NOW AND THE CAUSE IS BHEEMA.



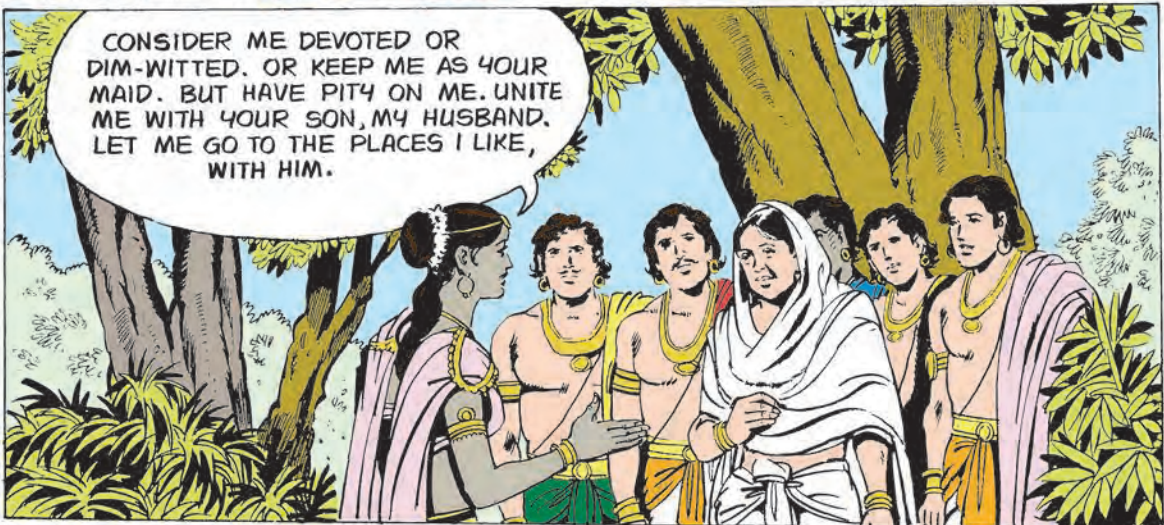
FORSAKING MY FRIENDS, MY TRIBE AND MY TRADITION, I HAVE CHOSEN YOUR SON AS MY HUSBAND.



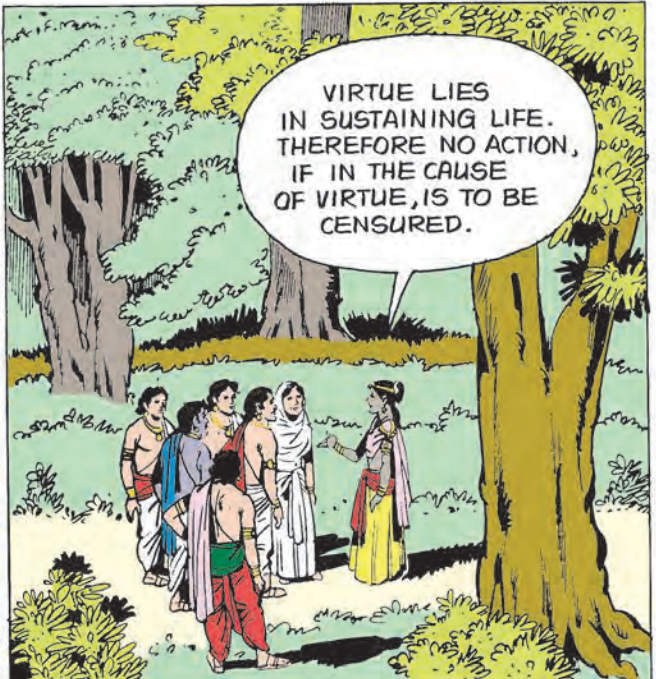
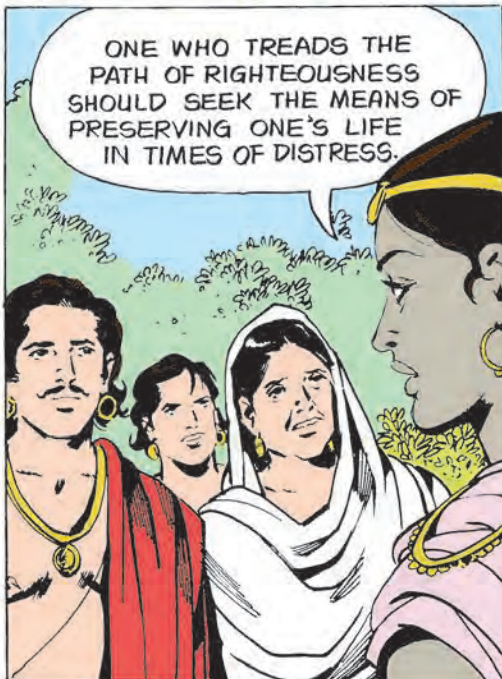
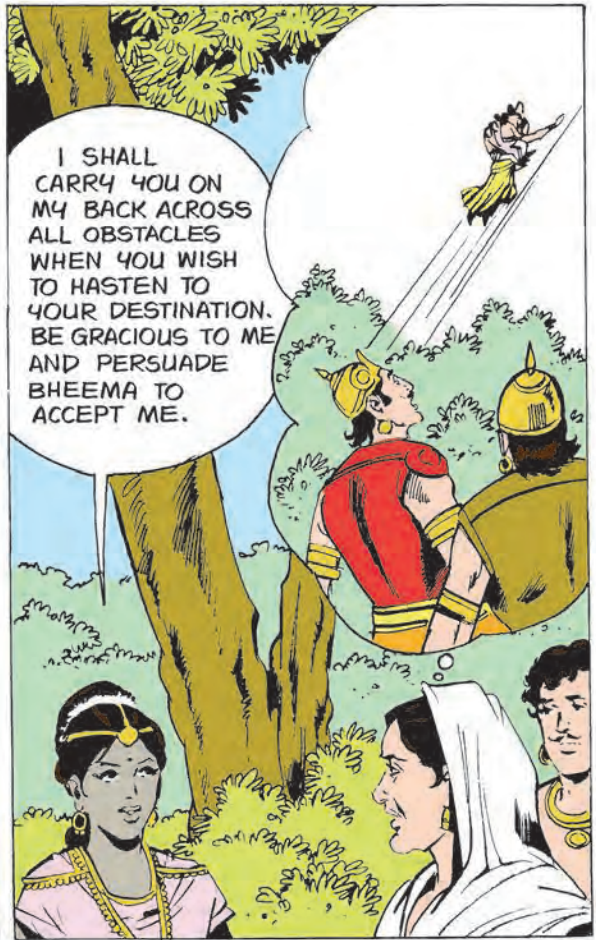
IF THAT HERO AND YOU DENY ME, I WILL NOT LIVE.



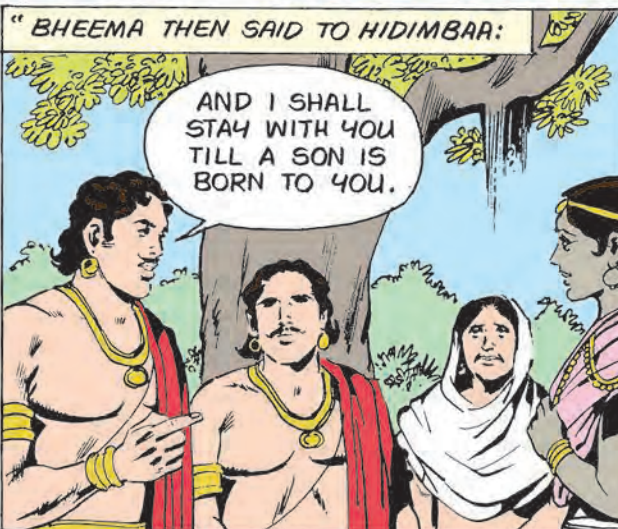
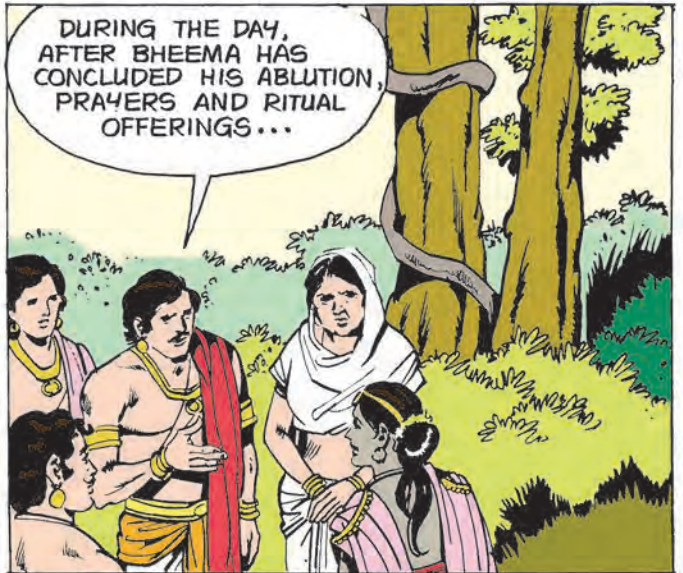
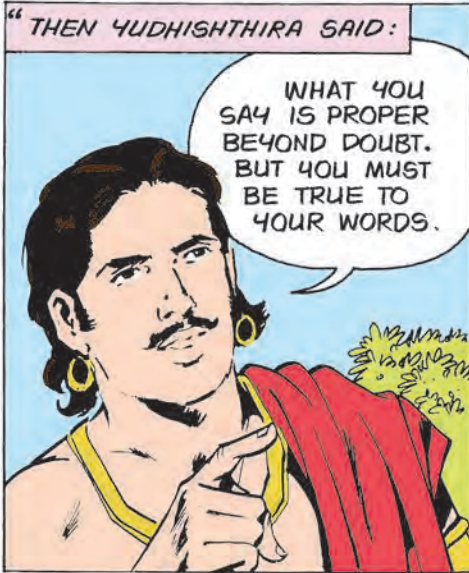
CONSIDER ME DEVOTED OR DIM-WITTED. OR KEEP ME AS YOUR MAID. BUT HAVE PITY ON ME. UNITE ME WITH YOUR SON, MY HUSBAND. LET ME GO TO THE PLACES I LIKE, WITH HIM.













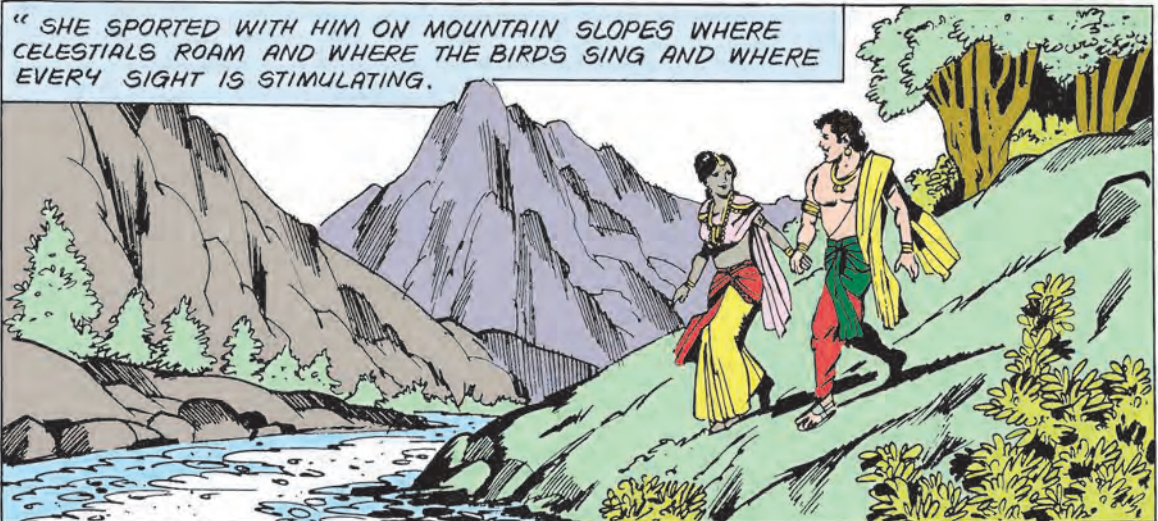
"...HIDIMBARA TOOK BHEEMA ON HER BACK, ROSE UP..."



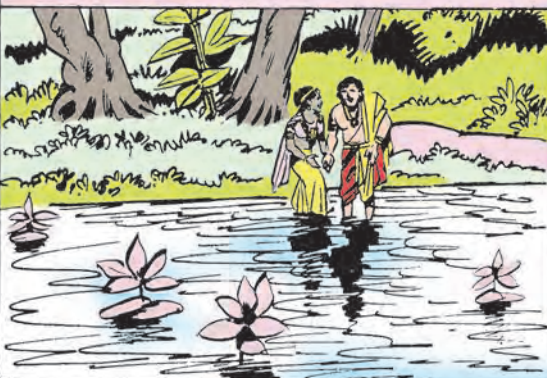
"...AND SPED THROUGH THE SKIES."



"SHE SPORTED WITH HIM ON MOUNTAIN SLOPES WHERE CELESTIALS ROAM AND WHERE THE BIRDS SING AND WHERE EVERY SIGHT IS STIMULATING."



"SHE DESCENDED WITH HIM ON LAKES COVERED WITH LOTUSES..."

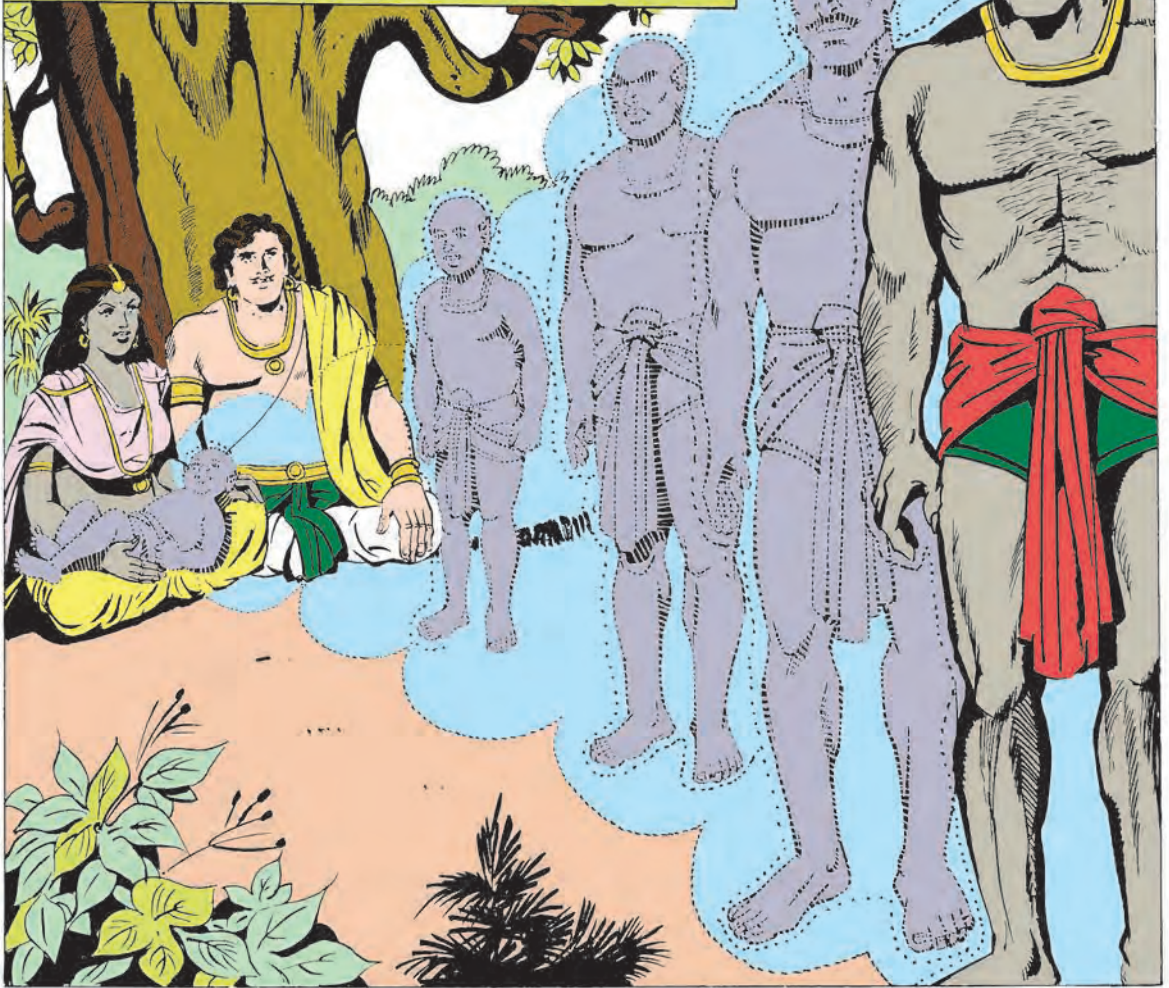


"...AND WALKED WITH HIM THROUGH WILD FORESTS OF STRANGE TREES AND DELICATE CREEPERS."





"SWIFT AS THE MIND IN HER MOBILITY, SHE SPORTED WITH BHEEMA IN VARIOUS PLACES TILL IN DUE COURSE SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A MIGHTY SON, BEGOTTEN BY THE PANDAVA. AND THE CHILD GREW INTO A YOUNG MAN THE INSTANT HE WAS BORN.



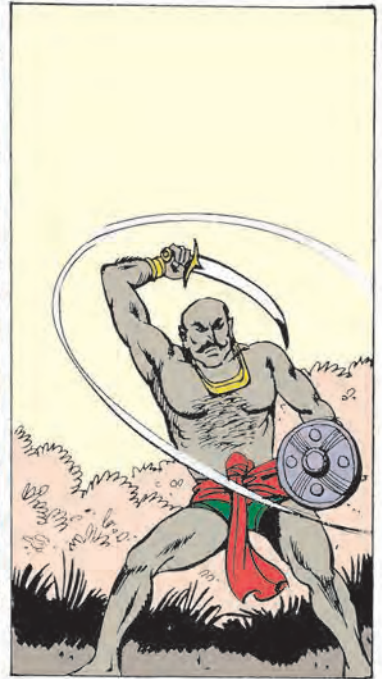
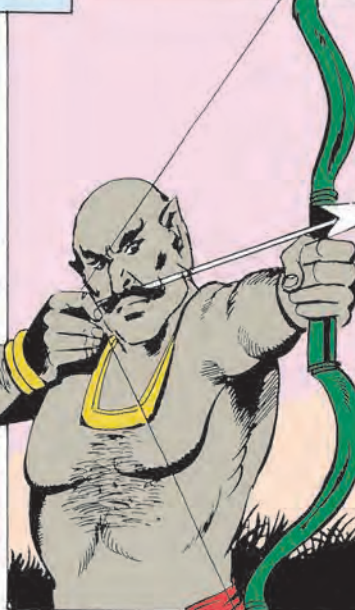
PERCEIVING HIS HEAD TO BE SMOOTH LIKE A WATER-POT HIS MOTHER NAMED HIM GHATOTKACHA.

AND THOUGH BEGOTTEN BY MAN, HE WAS SUPERHUMAN AND EXCELLED ALL THE RAKSHASAS AND PISHACHAS IN STRENGTH.





"THE MIGHTY SON SOON MASTERED THE SECRETS OF WIELDING WEAPONS OF ALL KINDS."



"AND GHATOTKACHA, WHO WAS FULL OF LOVE FOR THE PANDAVAS, WON THEIR AFFECTION AND CAME TO BE COUNTED ONE OF THEM."



"THEN HIDIMBAA SAID:

THE TERM OF MY STAY WITH MY HUSBAND HAS RUN OUT."



"AND SALUTING KUNTI AND THE PANDAVAS..."



"... SHE WENT HER WAY."

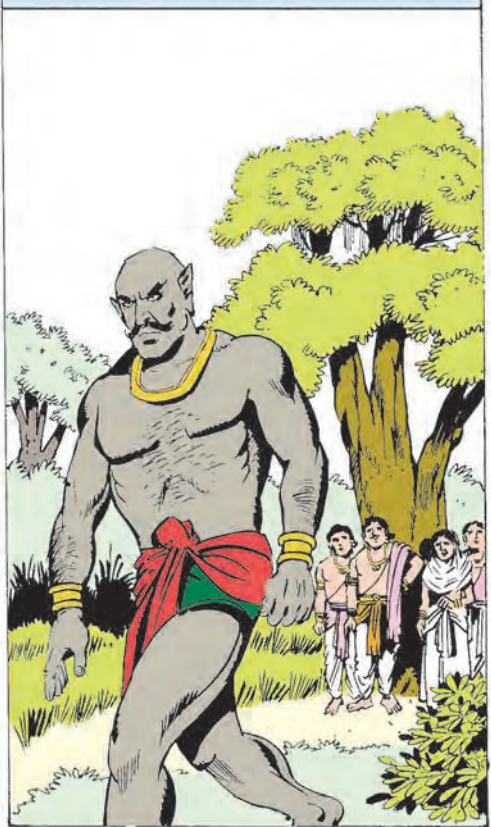




"AND GHATOTKACHA, ASSURING THE PANDAVAS THAT HE WOULD ALWAYS BE WITH THEM WHEN NEEDED, SALUTED THEM..."



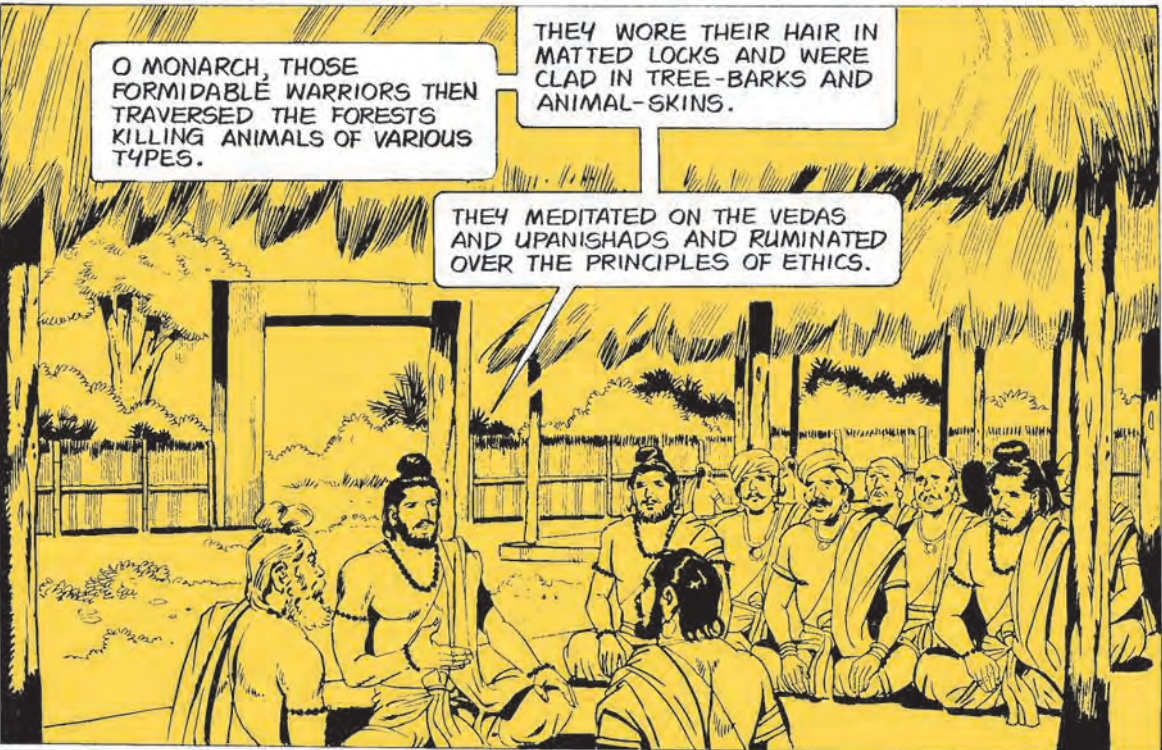
"...AND PROCEEDED NORTHWARDS."



O MONARCH, THOSE FORMIDABLE WARRIORS THEN TRAVERSED THE FORESTS KILLING ANIMALS OF VARIOUS TYPES.

THEY WORE THEIR HAIR IN MATTED LOCKS AND WERE CLAD IN TREE-BARKS AND ANIMAL-SKINS.

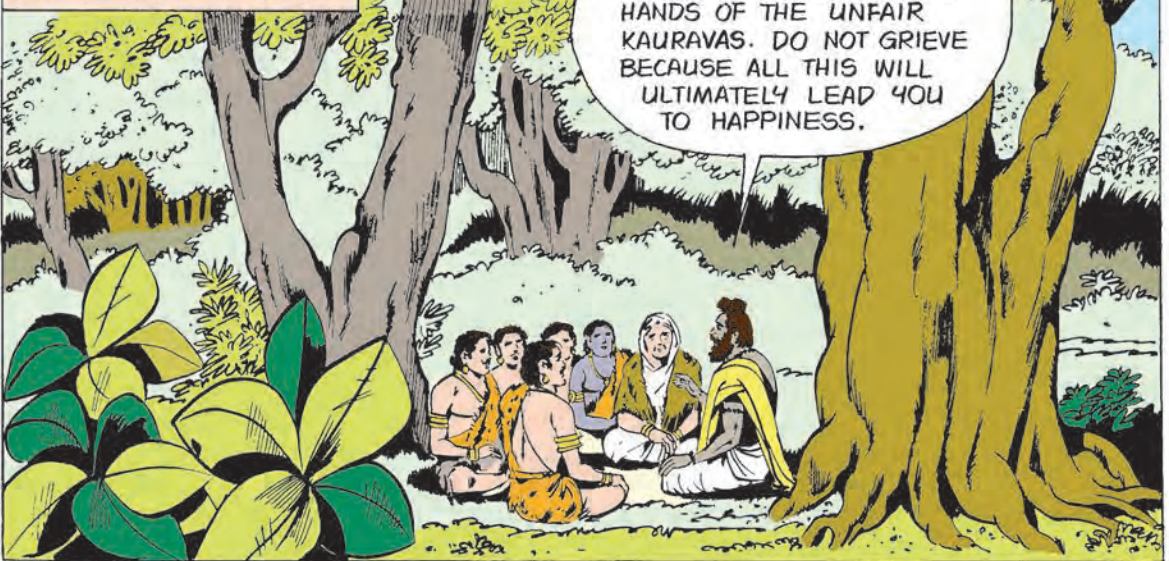
THEY MEDITATED ON THE VEDAS AND UPANISHADS AND RUMINATED OVER THE PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS.



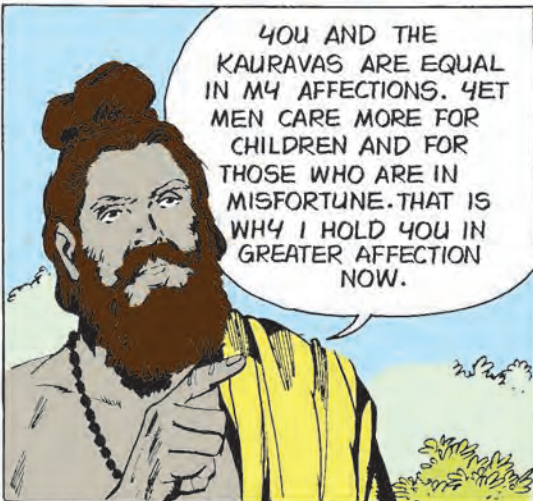


"WHILE ENGAGED THUS, THEY SAW THEIR GRANDFATHER, MY GURU VEDA VYASA, AND HE SAID TO THEM:

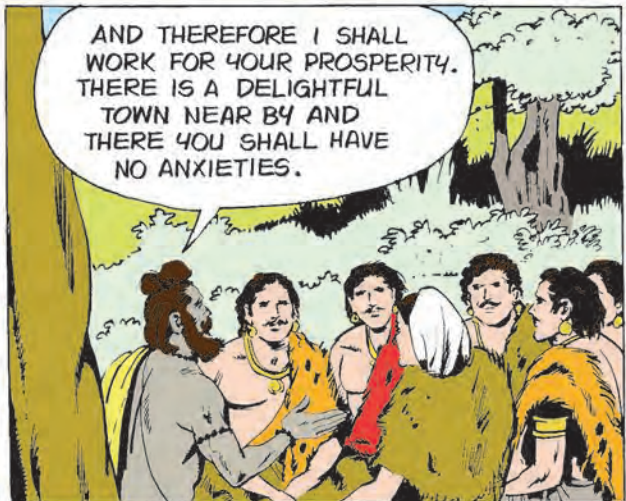
I HAVE COME TO YOU BECAUSE I HAD DIVINED YOUR MISFORTUNE AT THE HANDS OF THE UNFAIR KAURAVAS. DO NOT GRIEVE BECAUSE ALL THIS WILL ULTIMATELY LEAD YOU TO HAPPINESS.



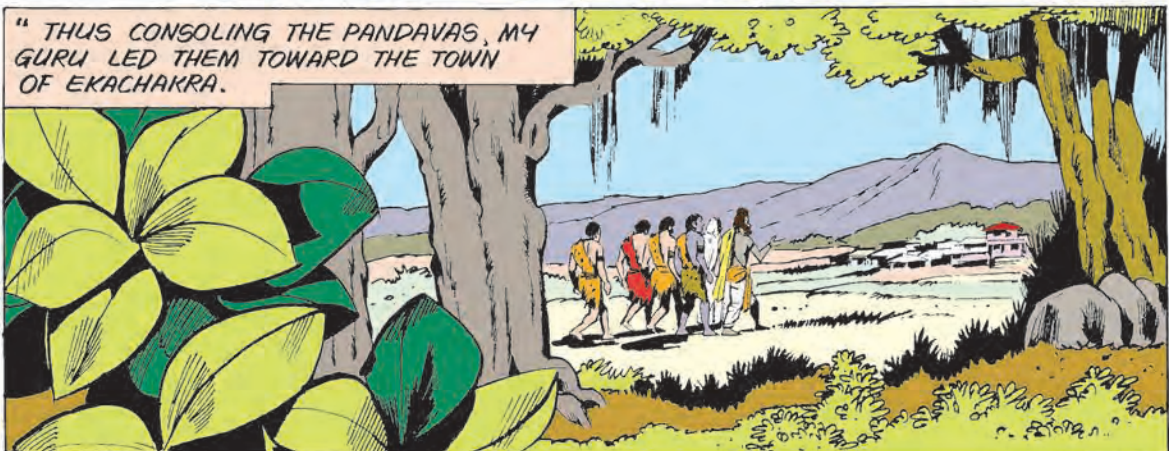
YOU AND THE KAURAVAS ARE EQUAL IN MY AFFECTIONS. YET MEN CARE MORE FOR CHILDREN AND FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN MISFORTUNE. THAT IS WHY I HOLD YOU IN GREATER AFFECTION NOW.



AND THEREFORE I SHALL WORK FOR YOUR PROSPERITY. THERE IS A DELIGHTFUL TOWN NEAR BY AND THERE YOU SHALL HAVE NO ANXIETIES.



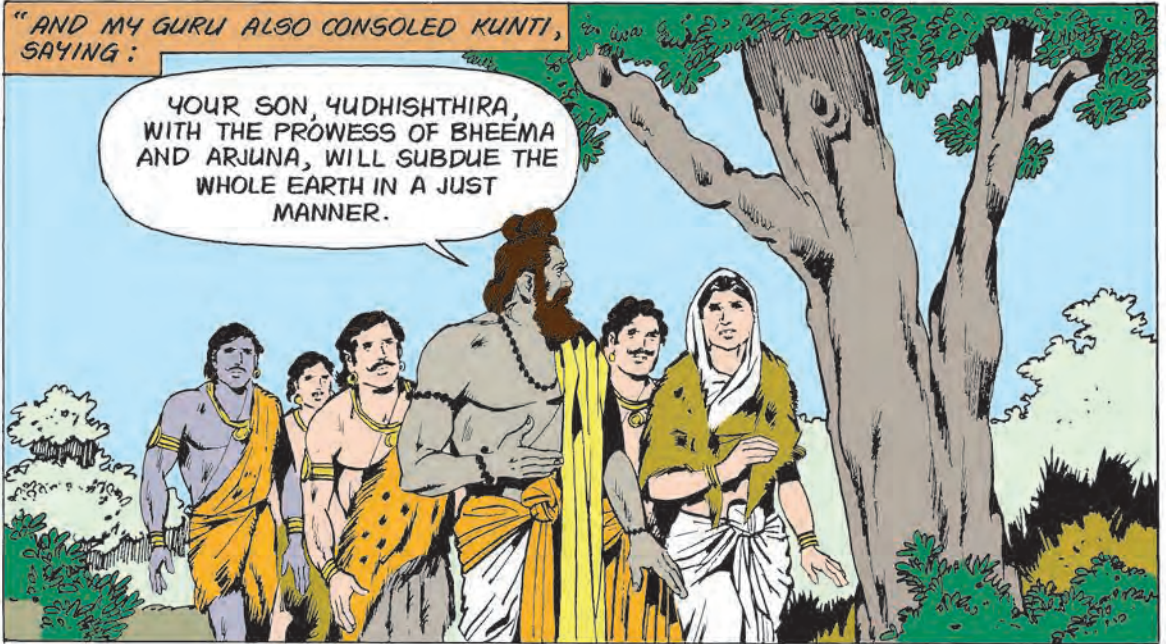
"THUS CONSOLING THE PANDAVAS, MY GURU LED THEM TOWARD THE TOWN OF EKACHAKRA.





"AND MY GURU ALSO CONSOLED KUNTI, SAYING :

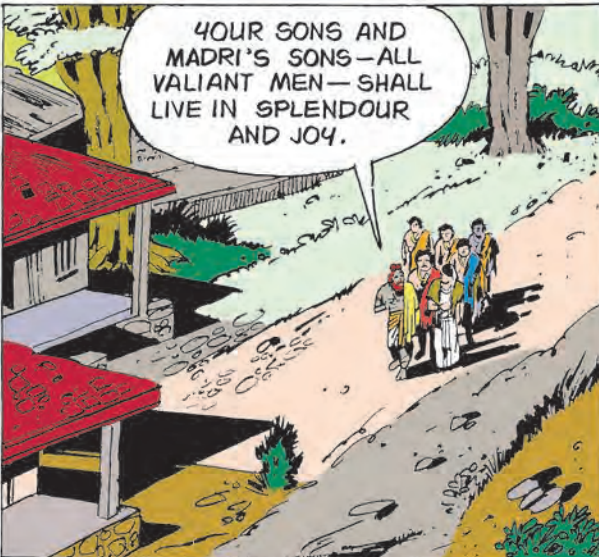
YOUR SON, YUDHISHTHIRA, WITH THE PROWESS OF BHEEMA AND ARJUNA, WILL SUBDUCE THE WHOLE EARTH IN A JUST MANNER.



HE WILL PERFORM SACRIFICES LIKE THE RAJASOOYA AND THE ASHWAMEDHA AND REIGN AS THE SOVEREIGN POWER.



YOUR SONS AND MADRI'S SONS—ALL VALIANT MEN—SHALL LIVE IN SPLENDOUR AND JOY.



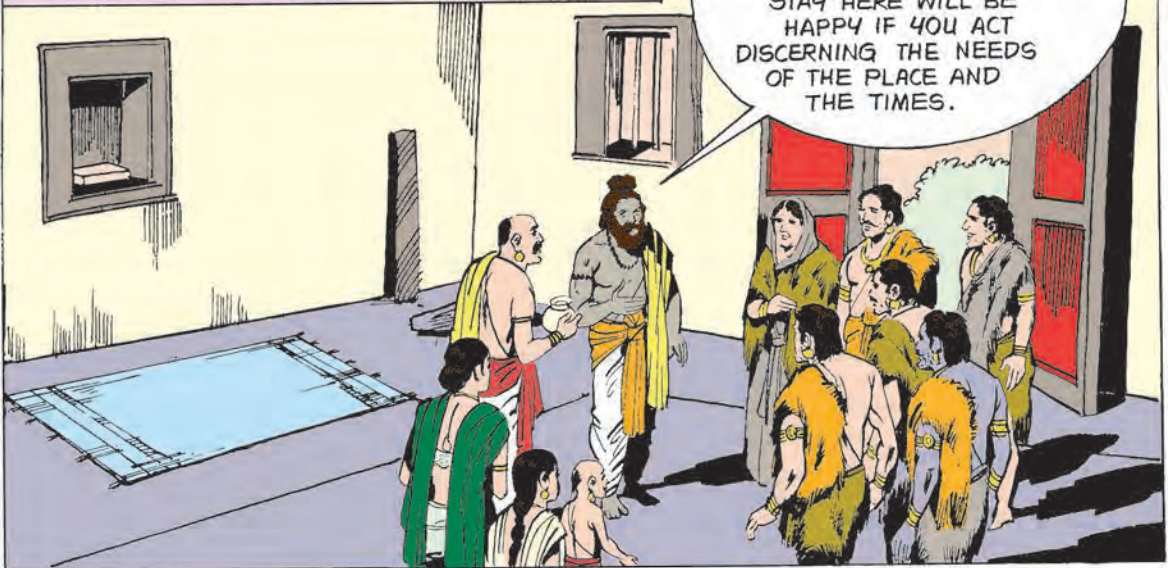
THEY SHALL RULE OVER THEIR ANCESTRAL KINGDOM, PROTECT THEIR FRIENDS AND KINSMEN AND ENJOY THE PLENITUDE OF REGAL RIGHTS.





" THEN MY GURU HAD THEM ACCOMMODATED IN A BRAHMANA'S HOUSE AND SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA:

STAY HERE FOR A MONTH AND AWAIT MY RETURN. YOUR STAY HERE WILL BE HAPPY IF YOU ACT DISCERNING THE NEEDS OF THE PLACE AND THE TIMES.

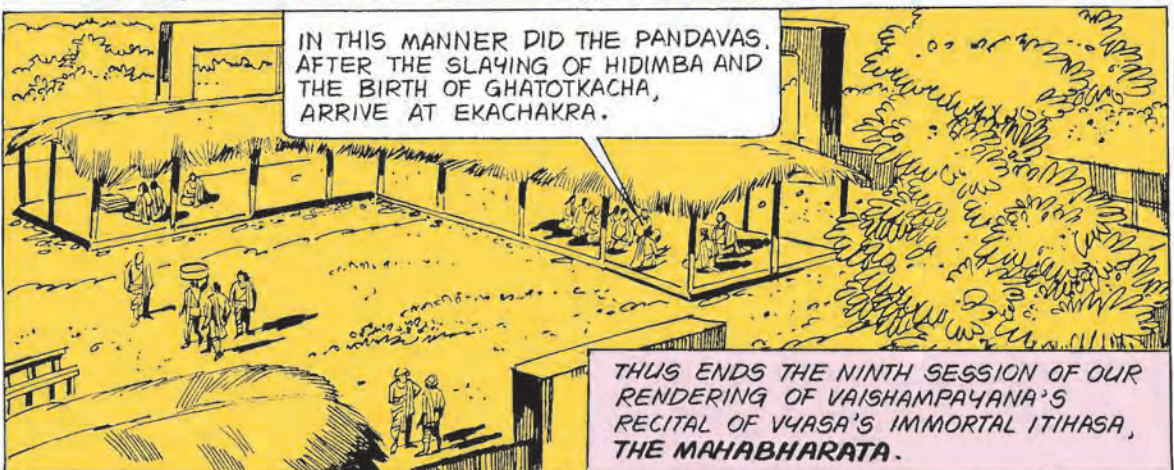


" THEN THE PANDAVAS SALUTED THE RISHI WITH JOINED PALMS...

"... AND MY DIVINE GURU WENDED HIS WAY BACK.



IN THIS MANNER DID THE PANDAVAS, AFTER THE SLAYING OF HIDIMBA AND THE BIRTH OF GHATOTKACHA, ARRIVE AT EKACHAKRA.



THIS ENDS THE NINTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VAISHAMPAYANA'S RECITAL OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA, THE MAHABHARATA.